STARBLAZER

SPACE FICTION ADVENTURE IN PICTURES No. 116

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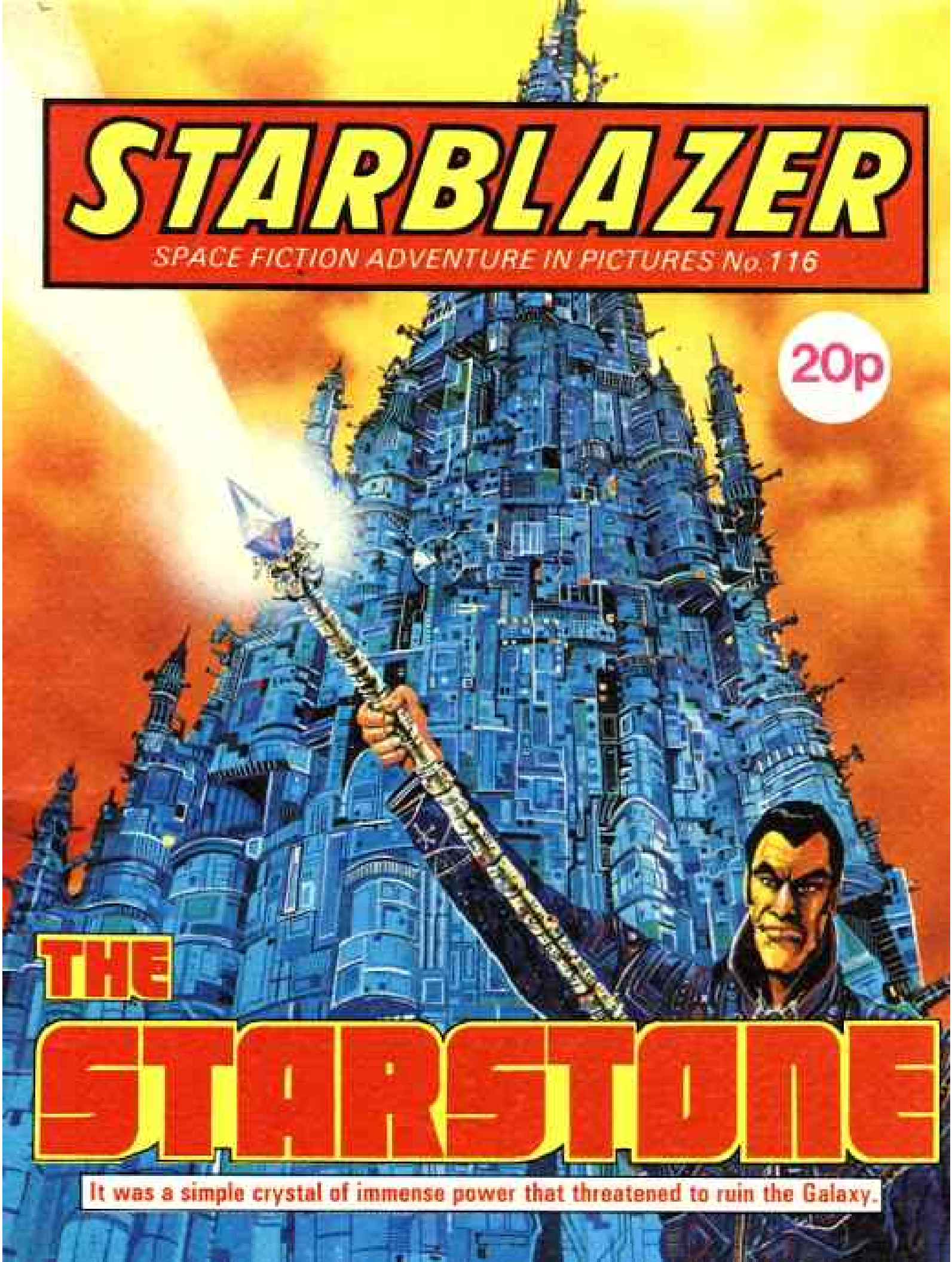


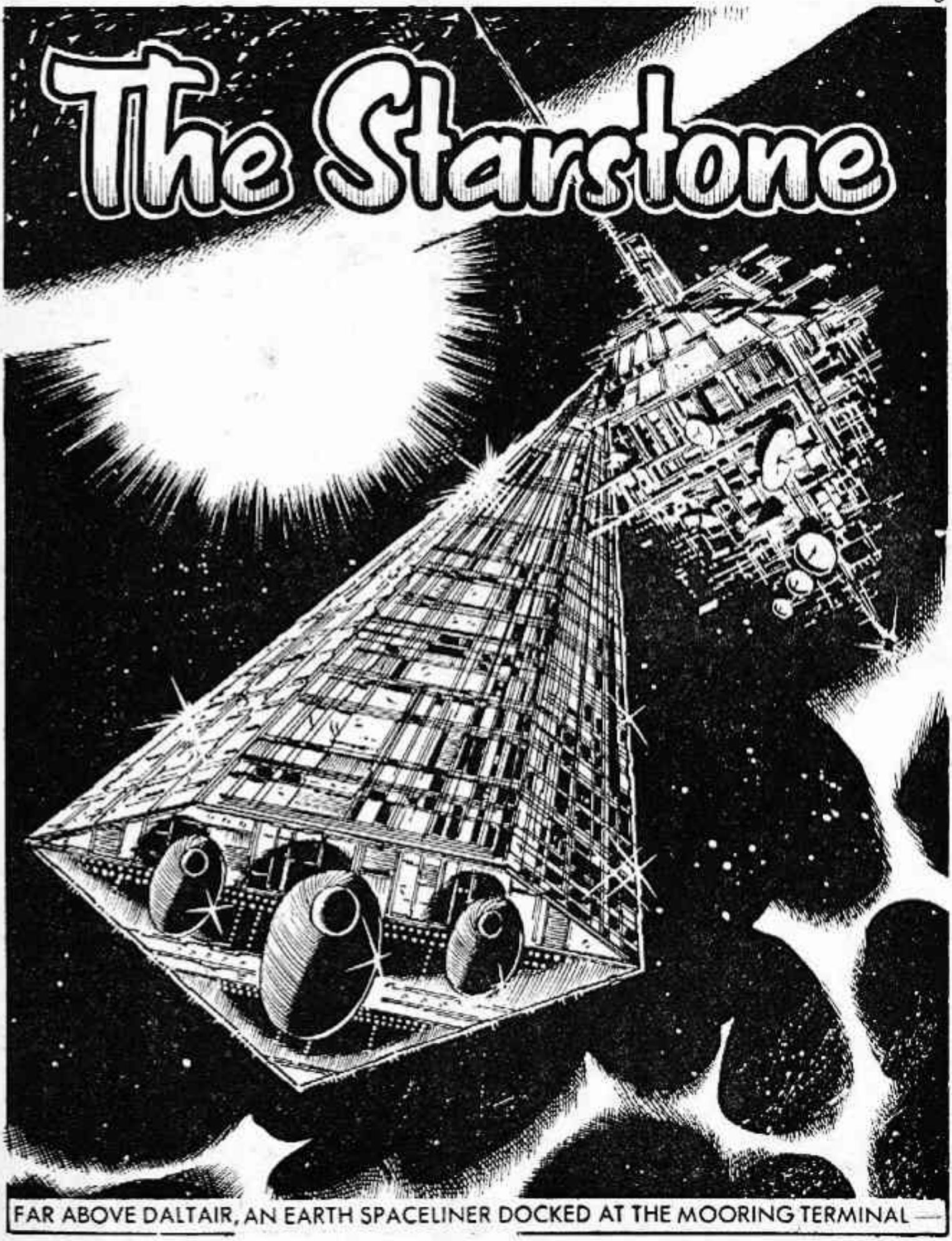
THE STARSTONE

It was a simple crystal of immense power that threatened to ruin the Galaxy.

STARBLAZER

DALTAIR WAS COLONISED IN 2384 BY EARTH SETTLERS. INCORPORATED INTO THE EARTH FEDERATION SOME FIFTY YEARS LATER, IT ENJOYED A BRIEF PERIOD OF GREAT PROSPERITY. POSITIONED AS IT WAS IN THE VAST GALACTIC SEA OF TRANQUILITY, THE HUGE TRANS-COSMIC LINERS STOPPED TO REFUEL ON THEIR COLOSSAL JOURNEYS ACROSS THE HEAVENS. BUT WITH THE ADVENT OF INFLIGHT REFUELLING, DALTAIR BECAME A BACKWATER, AN UNIMPORTANT ISLAND IN AN OCEAN OF NOTHINGNESS. UNIMPORTANT, THAT WAS, UNTIL THE DISCOVERY OF—

The Starstone



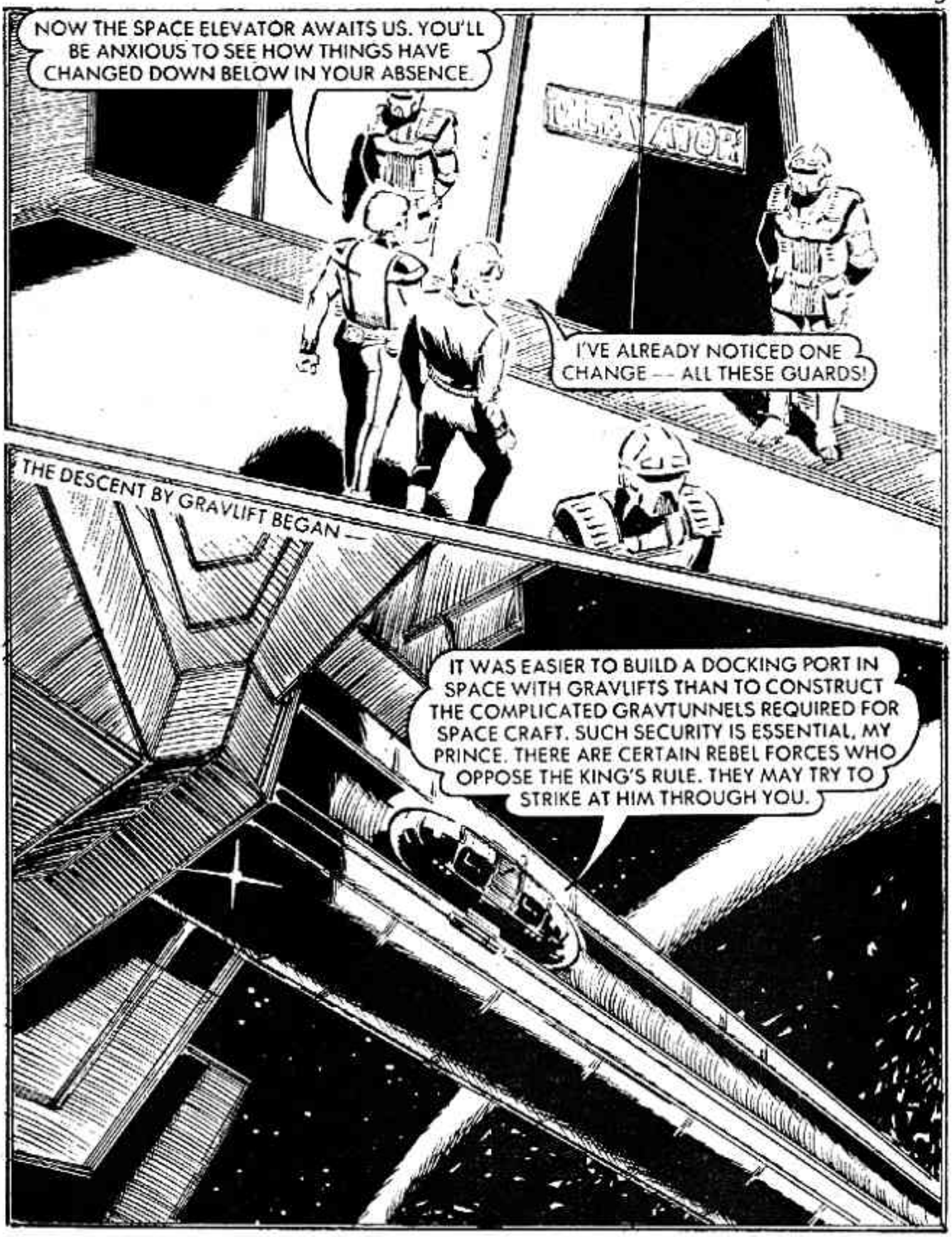
FAR ABOVE DALTAIR, AN EARTH SPACELINER DOCKED AT THE MOORING TERMINAL —

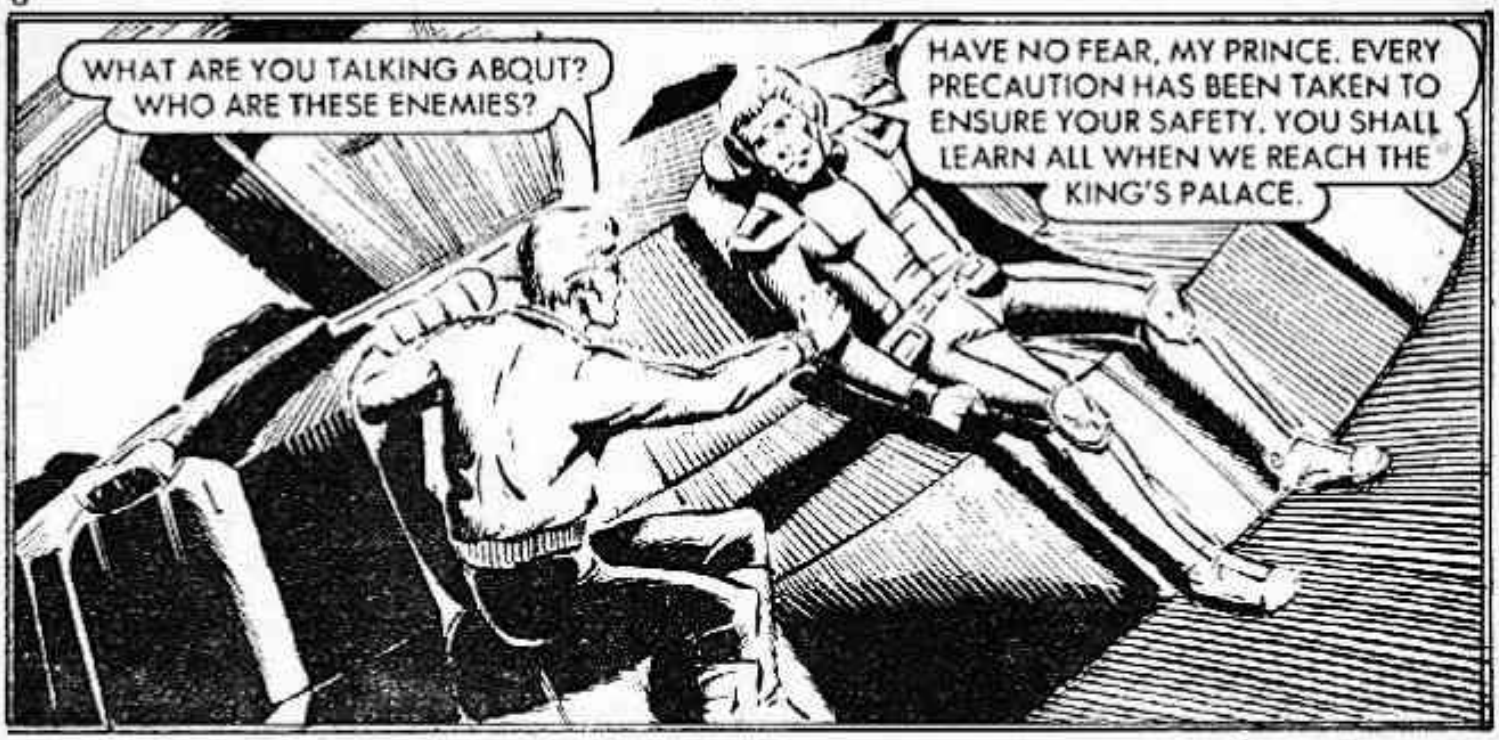
A SOLITARY PASSENGER ALIGHTED FROM THE GREAT LINER —

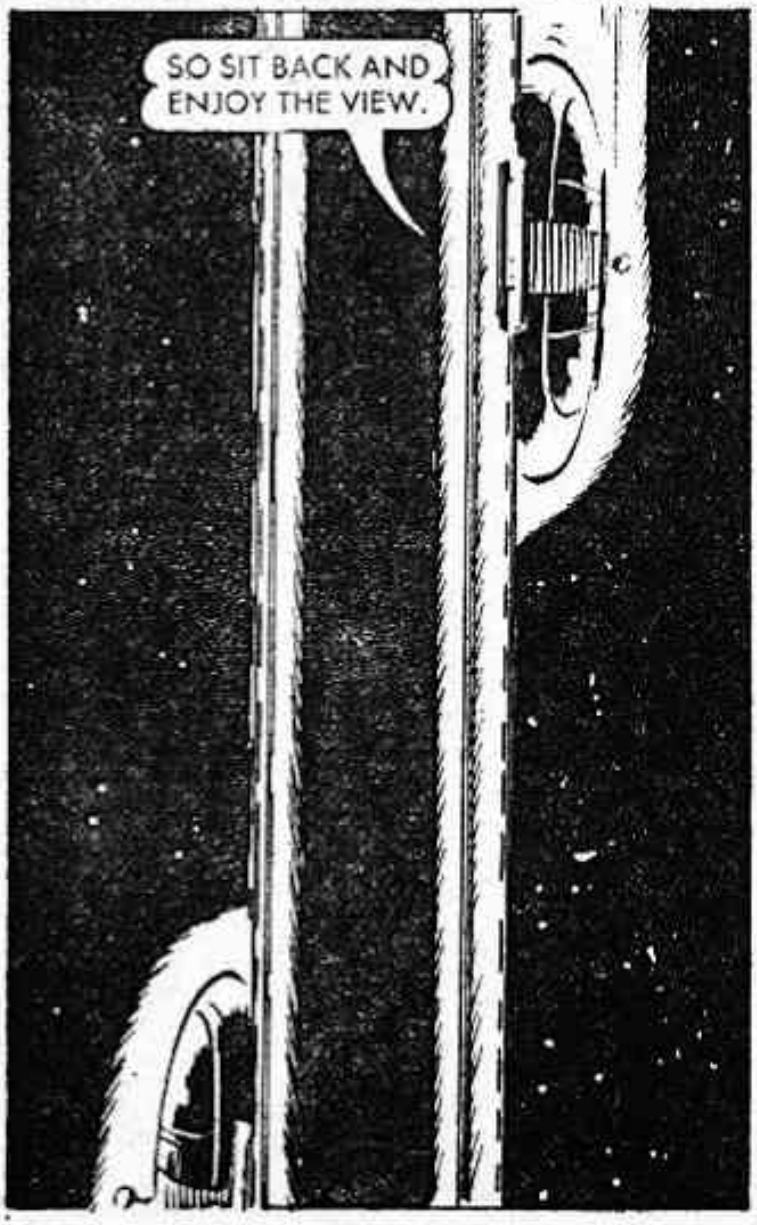
WELCOME HOME, PRINCE ARAN.

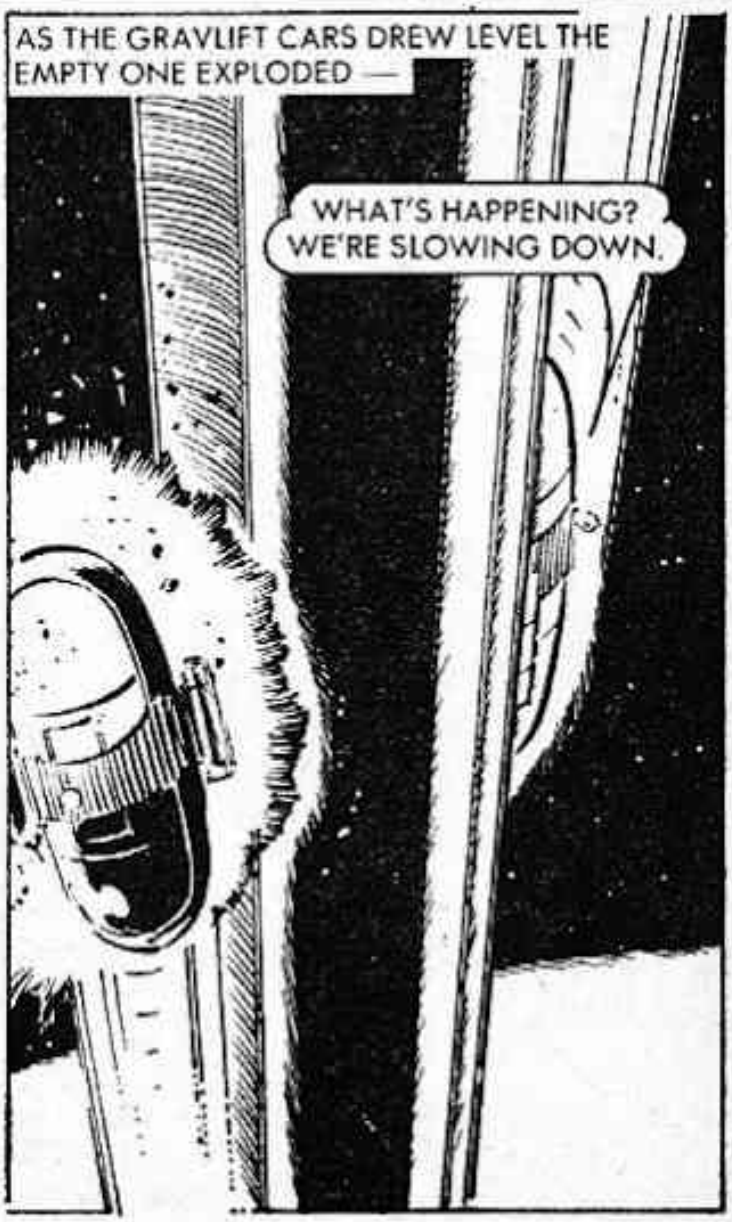
THANK YOU. AFTER SPENDING THREE YEARS AT AN OFFWORLD UNIVERSITY, IT'S GOOD TO BE BACK.

NOW THAT YOUR EDUCATION IS COMPLETE, YOU MUST TAKE UP YOUR OFFICIAL DUTIES. THIS IS THE INSIGNIA OF OFFICE.


NOW THE SPACE ELEVATOR AWAITS US. YOU'LL BE ANXIOUS TO SEE HOW THINGS HAVE CHANGED DOWN BELOW IN YOUR ABSENCE.
I'VE ALREADY NOTICED ONE CHANGE — ALL THESE GUARDS!
THE DESCENT BY GRAVLIFT BEGAN —
IT WAS EASIER TO BUILD A DOCKING PORT IN SPACE WITH GRAVLIFTS THAN TO CONSTRUCT THE COMPLICATED GRAVTUNNELS REQUIRED FOR SPACE CRAFT. SUCH SECURITY IS ESSENTIAL, MY PRINCE. THERE ARE CERTAIN REBEL FORCES WHO OPPOSE THE KING'S RULE. THEY MAY TRY TO STRIKE AT HIM THROUGH YOU.


WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHO ARE THESE ENEMIES?
HAVE NO FEAR, MY PRINCE. EVERY PRECAUTION HAS BEEN TAKEN TO ENSURE YOUR SAFETY. YOU SHALL LEARN ALL WHEN WE REACH THE KING'S PALACE.


SO SIT BACK AND ENJOY THE VIEW.


AS THE GRAVLIFT CARS DREW LEVEL THE EMPTY ONE EXPLODED —
WHAT'S HAPPENING? WE'RE SLOWING DOWN.

THAT EXPLOSION! IN THE EVENT OF ANY MALFUNCTION THE ENTIRE ELEVATOR SLOWS DOWN. THIS CAN ONLY BE THE WORK OF THE REBELS.

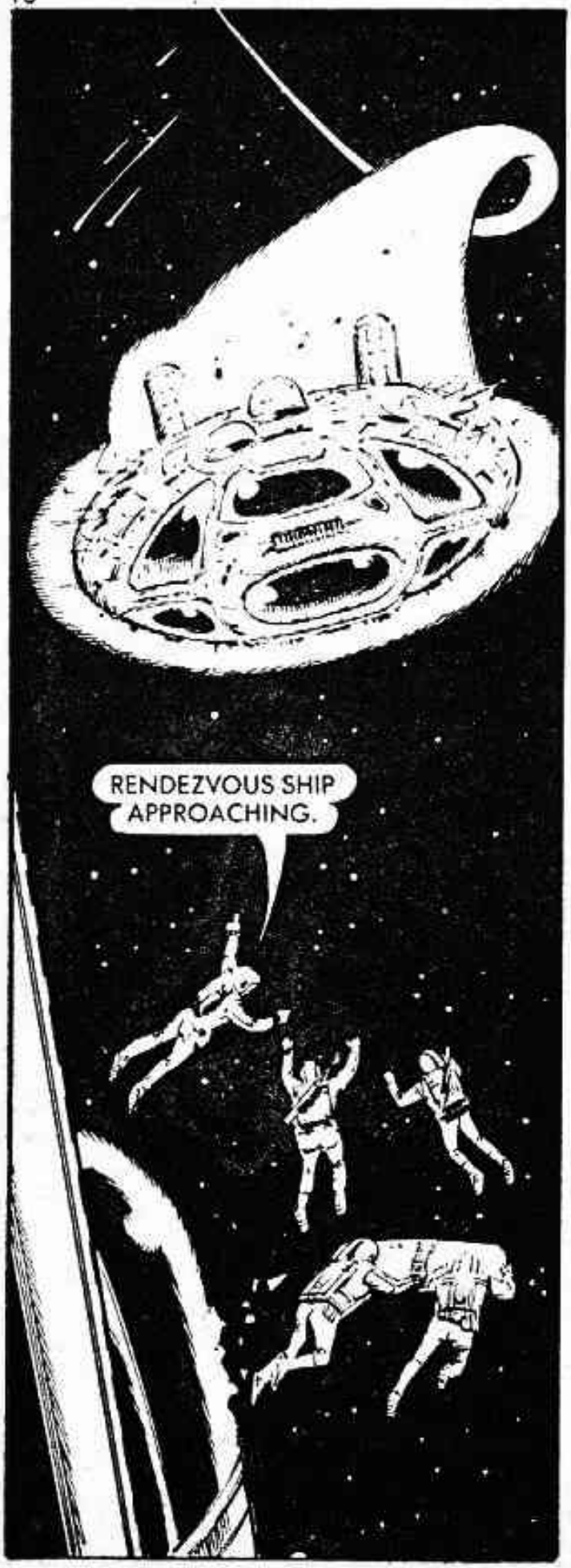
FROM THE OTHER CAR . . .
EVEN WITH ALL THE ELABORATE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS, THE ELEVATOR'S SECOND CAR WAS SOMEHOW OVERLOOKED. THAT IS ONE OVERSIGHT OUR TYRANT KING WILL SOON REGRET!

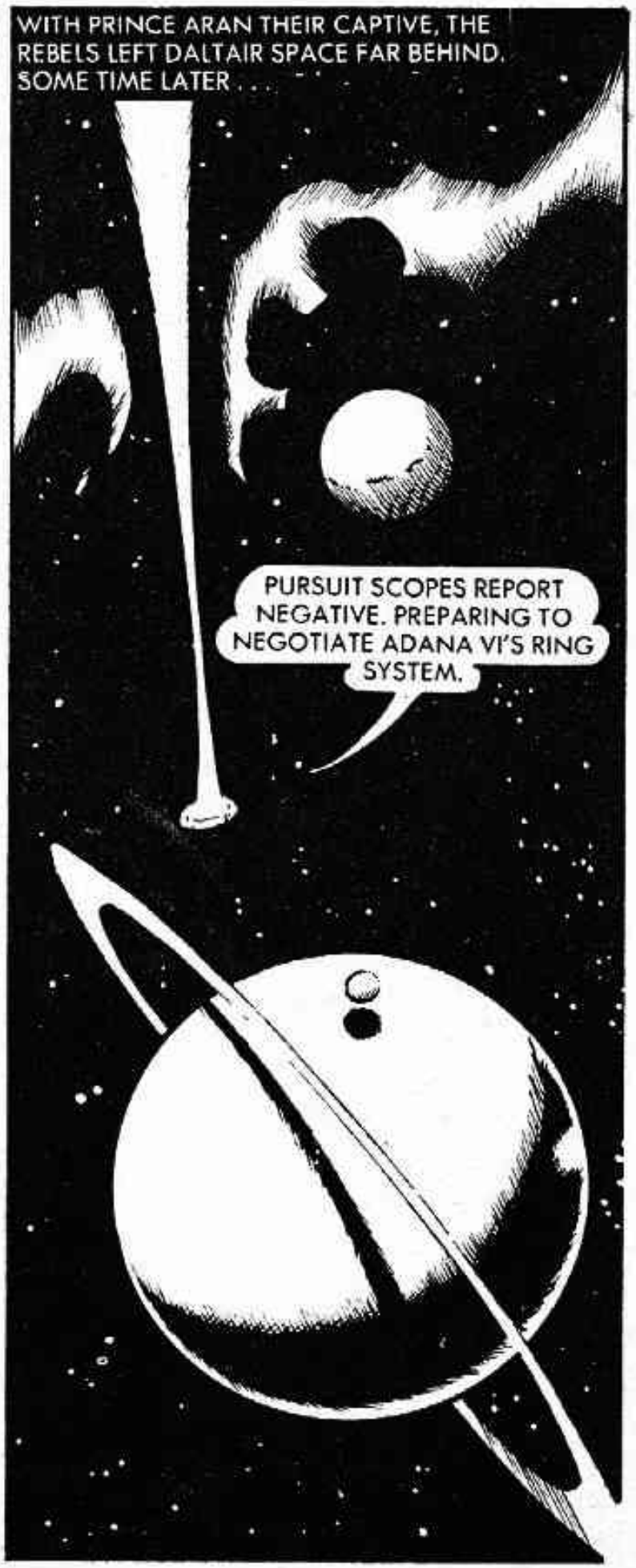
ION PARTICLE BLASTERS MADE SHORT WORK OF THE GLASTIC OBSERVATION DOME.
HURRY! IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE THIS VICINITY IS SWARMING WITH SECURITY GUARDS.

THE SUDDEN DEPRESSURISATION MEANT DISASTER FOR THE PASSENGERS.
THEY'VE BROKEN THROUGH!
AIR IS RUSHING OUT INTO SPACE. G-GOT TO STRAP MYSELF DOWN BEFORE I'M SWEPT OUT WITH IT.

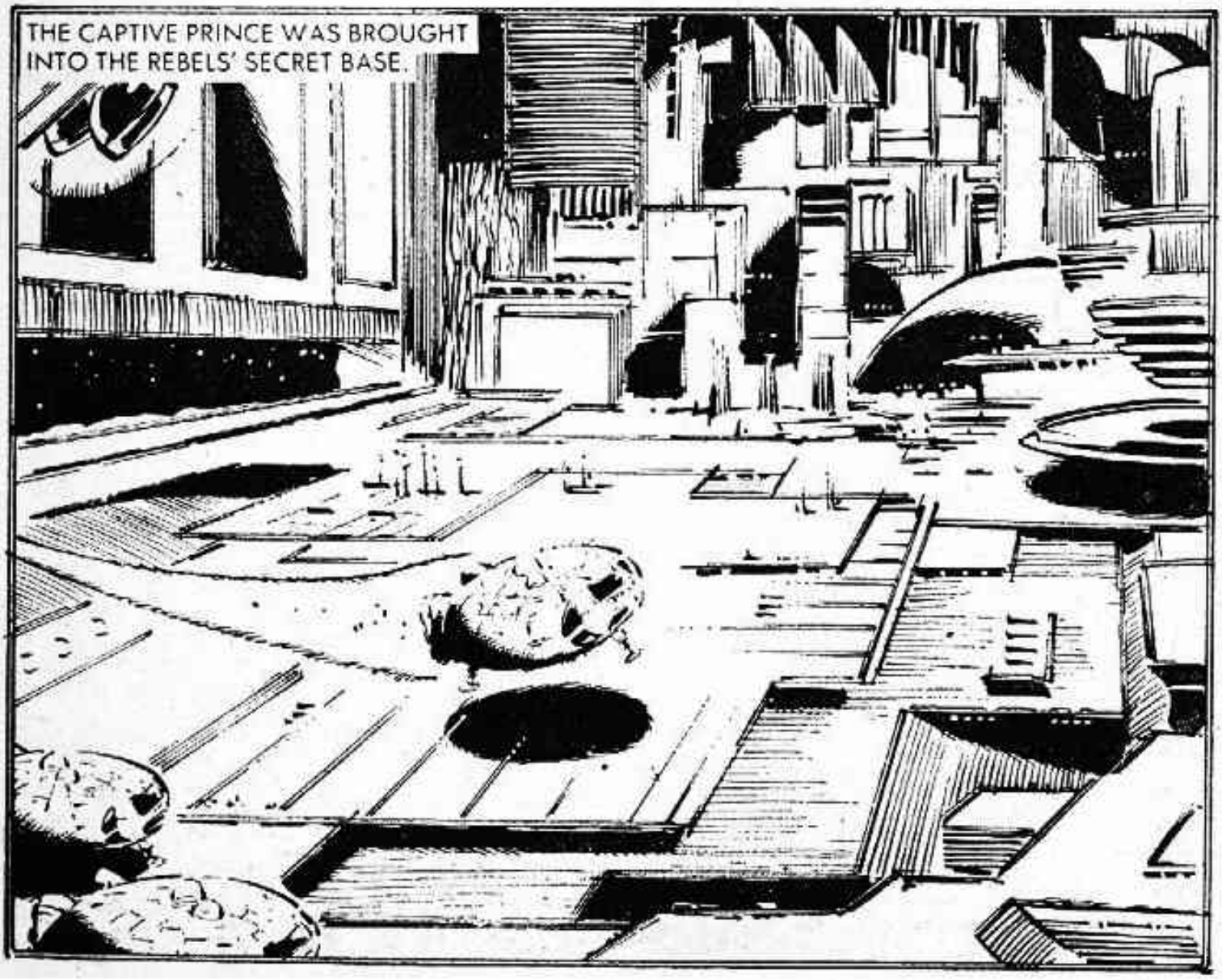
BY THE TIME THE AUTOMATIC PRESSURE COMPENSATORS HAD CUT IN, THE TWO PASSENGERS WERE UNCONSCIOUS —
PRINCE ARAN IS THE ONE WE WANT. GIVE THE OTHER AN OXYGEN MASK . . . HE'LL BE SAFE ENOUGH UNTIL A MAINTENANCE CREW CAN GET HERE.

INTO THE PRESSURE POD WITH HIM . . . THEN LET'S GET OUT OF HERE.


RENDEZVOUS SHIP APPROACHING.


WITH PRINCE ARAN THEIR CAPTIVE, THE REBELS LEFT DALTAIR SPACE FAR BEHIND. SOME TIME LATER . . .
PURSUIT SCOPES REPORT NEGATIVE. PREPARING TO NEGOTIATE ADANA VI'S RING SYSTEM.

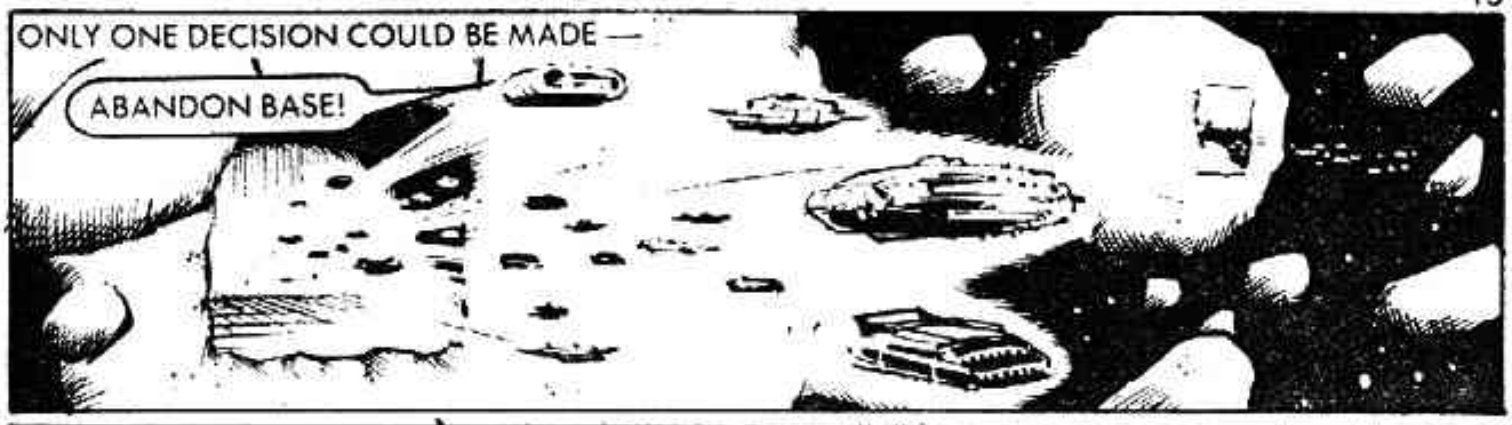
UNTOLD MILLIONS OF ORBITING MOONLETS MADE UP THE RINGS OF ADANA VI. TO NAVIGATE AMONG THEM WAS IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT A MAGNO-GUIDANCE TRAIL.
APPROACHING TRAIL'S END. DOCKING PROCEDURE UNDERWAY.


THE CAPTIVE PRINCE WAS BROUGHT INTO THE REBELS' SECRET BASE.

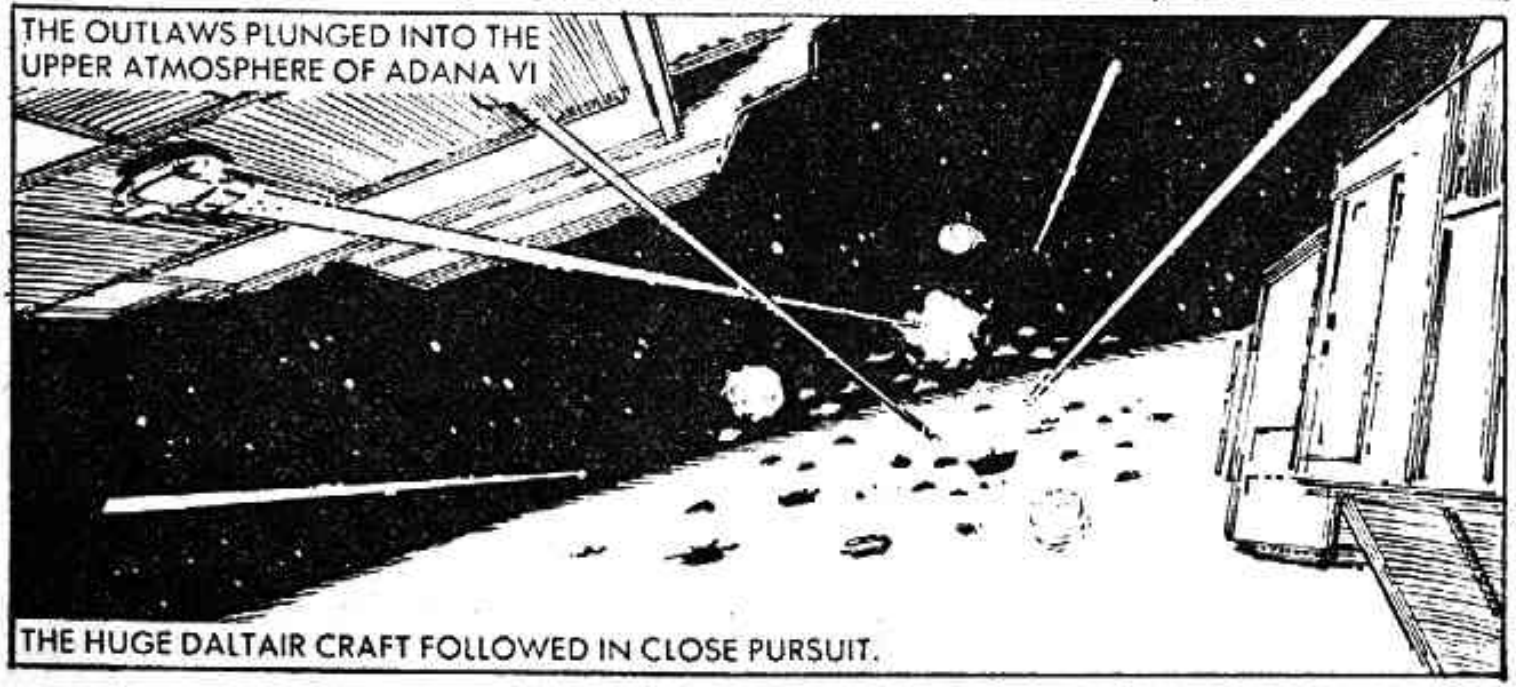
TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF ME! I DEMAND TO KNOW WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT!
YOU WILL KNOW SOON ENOUGH.
COLONEL CHARNE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
IT ISN'T COLONEL ANYMORE, MY BOY . . . JUST CHARNE. THE IMPERIAL ARMY WAS DISBANDED SOME TIME AGO.

TRAITOR!
I'M NO TRAITOR! I'M SORRY TO BE THE ONE TO TELL YOU THIS, BUT YOUR FATHER IS DEAD. NOW YOU'LL FIND THAT A LOT OF YOUR OLD FRIENDS ARE BRANDED AS REBELS. WE PREFER THIS EXISTENCE — HARSH AS IT IS — TO THAT OF LIVING UNDER THE NEW KING'S TYRANNICAL RULE.
I DO NOT BELIEVE YOU!
YOUR FATHER WAS KILLED IN A REVOLT SOME SIX MONTHS AGO. ALL COMMUNICATIONS ARE CONTROLLED. WE COULD NOT CONTACT YOU. THE NEW LEADER IS YOUR FATHER'S COUSIN, MEAKHAN.

SUDDENLY —
CHARNE! WE HAVE AN EMERGENCY! ENEMY WARFLEET HEADING THIS WAY!
INSIDE THE OPERATIONS ROOM —
WHY ALL THE EXCITEMENT? WE'VE HAD PATROLS LOOKING FOR US BEFORE. THEY HAVEN'T MUCH CHANCE OF FINDING US IN THIS VAST SYSTEM OF RINGS. THAT'S WHY WE CHOSE THIS PLACE FOR OUR BASE.
BUT THIS IS NOT A RANDOM SEARCH. THEY SEEM TO KNOW WHERE WE ARE — AND THEY'RE HEADING STRAIGHT FOR US!


ONLY ONE DECISION COULD BE MADE —
ABANDON BASE!

PRINCE ARAN WAS ABOARD ONE OF THE FLEEING SHIPS. HE WAS STILL DAZED AND CONFUSED FROM THE SUDDEN RUSH OF EVENTS.
SCATTER AND RE-GROUP ACCORDING TO EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE.
HOLD ON, PRINCE. THIS IS ONE SURE WAY OF RIDDING OURSELVES OF UNINVITED GUESTS.


THE OUTLAWS PLUNGED INTO THE UPPER ATMOSPHERE OF ADANA VI
THE HUGE DALTAIR CRAFT FOLLOWED IN CLOSE PURSUIT.

VISIBLE SCANNING IS IMPOSSIBLE IN THIS THICK ATMOSPHERE . . . AND ELECTRONIC SENSORS ARE HAMPERED BY THE PLANET'S STRONG MAGNETIC FIELD. THOSE PURSUIT SHIPS HAVEN'T A CHANCE OF FINDING US NOW.
SUDDENLY, THE CRAFT SHUDDERED TO A STANDSTILL —
WH-WHAT'S HAPPENING?
WE'VE BEEN SNARED BY A TRACTOR BEAM! BUT HOW COULD THEY HAVE POSSIBLY LOCKED ONTO US IN THESE CONDITIONS?

SOON —
WE HAVE RECOVERED PRINCE ARAN SAFELY.
BUT WE HAVE FAILED IN OUR MISSION TO WIPE OUT THE OUTLAWS. WE SHALL PAY DEARLY FOR THEIR ESCAPE WHEN WE ARRIVE BACK ON DALTAIR.
AS THE SHIPS APPROACHED A LANDING ON DALTAIR —
I-I SEE IT, BUT I DON'T BELIEVE IT! WHAT HAS HAPPENED DOWN THERE?
JUST OVER SIX MONTHS AGO A STRANGE METEOR OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN FELL FROM THE SKY AND BROUGHT TOTAL DESTRUCTION TO OUR CAPITAL CITY.

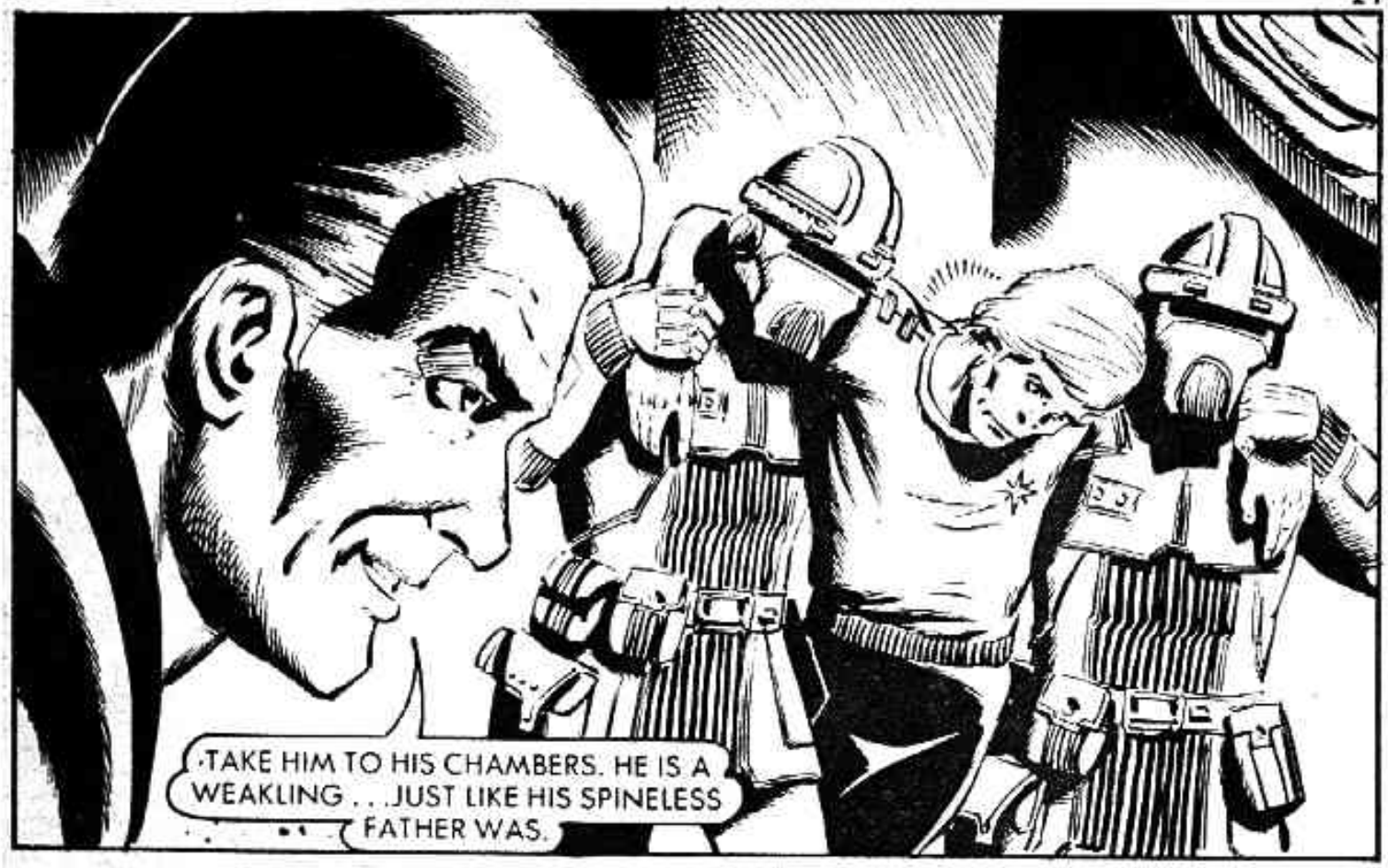
YOU MEAN A METEORITE CAUSED ALL THIS?
THE STARSTONE IS NO ORDINARY METEORITE — AS YOU ARE ABOUT TO LEARN FOR YOURSELF.
THE SHIP HEADED FOR A DOCKING ZONE NEXT TO A CRUMBLING CASTLE.

ARAN AND THE PILOT WERE TAKEN BEFORE THE KING
I AM PLEASED TO SEE THAT YOU ARE UNHARMED, PRINCE ARAN. IT WAS INDEED FORTUNATE THAT I HAD THE PRIME MINISTER PLACE A HOMING TRANSMITTER IN YOUR MEDALLION OF OFFICE . . .
SO THAT'S HOW YOU FOUND US SO EASILY. YOU USED YOUR OWN KIN AS BAIT TO TRACK US DOWN!
SILENCE!
YOU'RE SCUM.

YOU'RE DEAD!
THE PILOT'S BODY WAS INSTANTLY VAPOURISED.

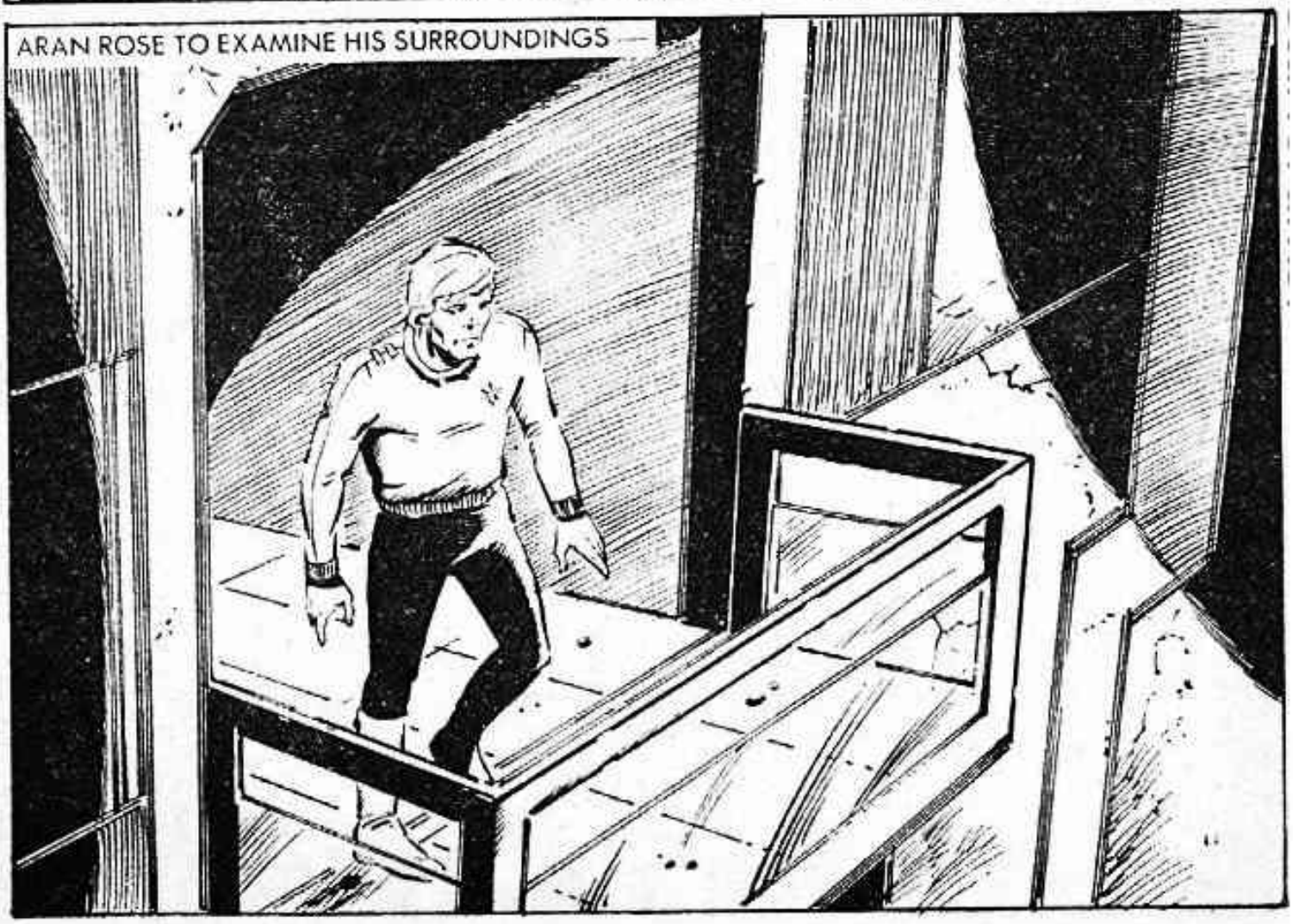
WHAT SORT OF KING ARE YOU?
HE DEFIED ME — HE DIED. GUARD — BRING THE ENCEPHALISOR.

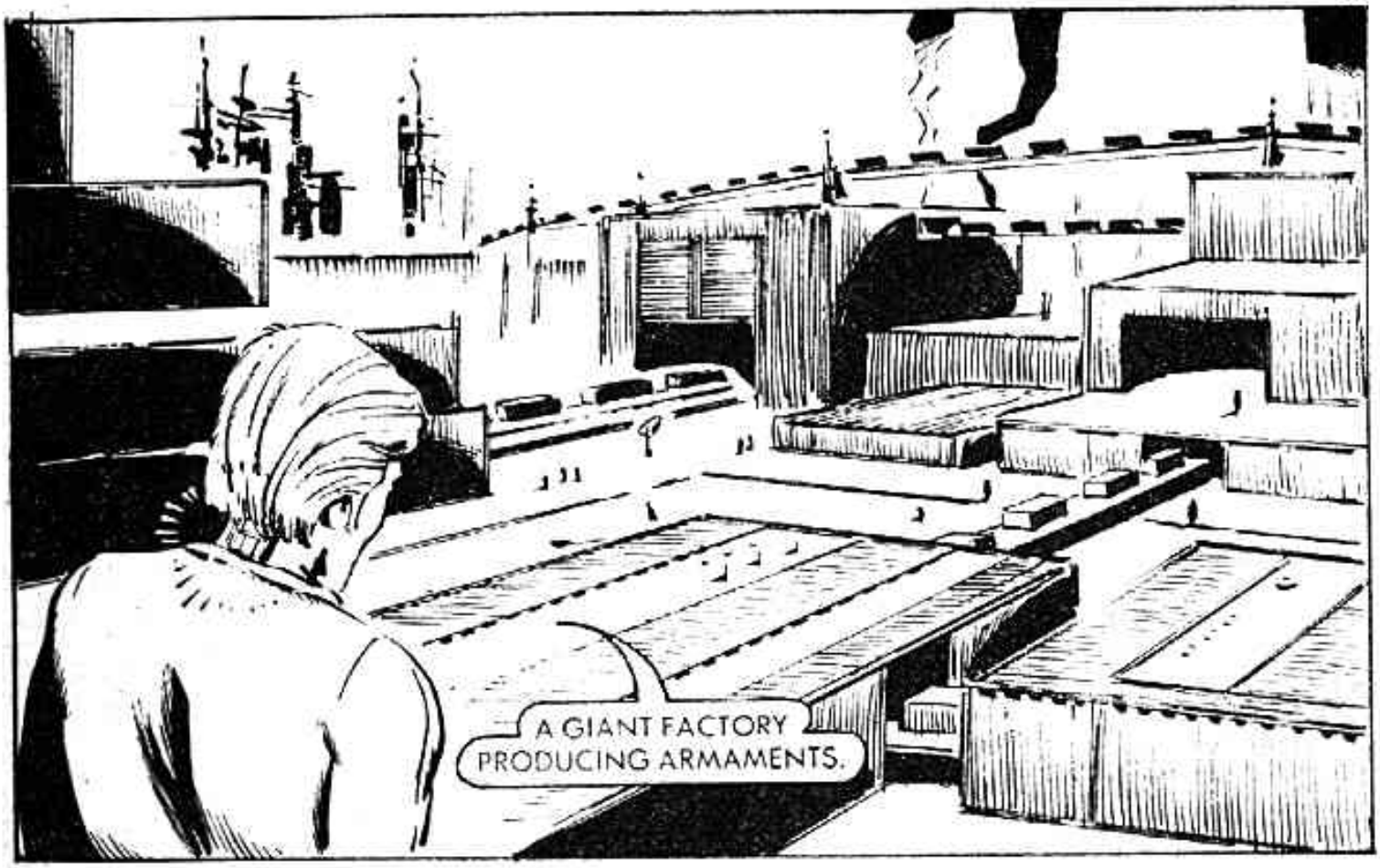
THE ENCEPHALISOR OVER-RODE THE IMPULSES OF THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM.

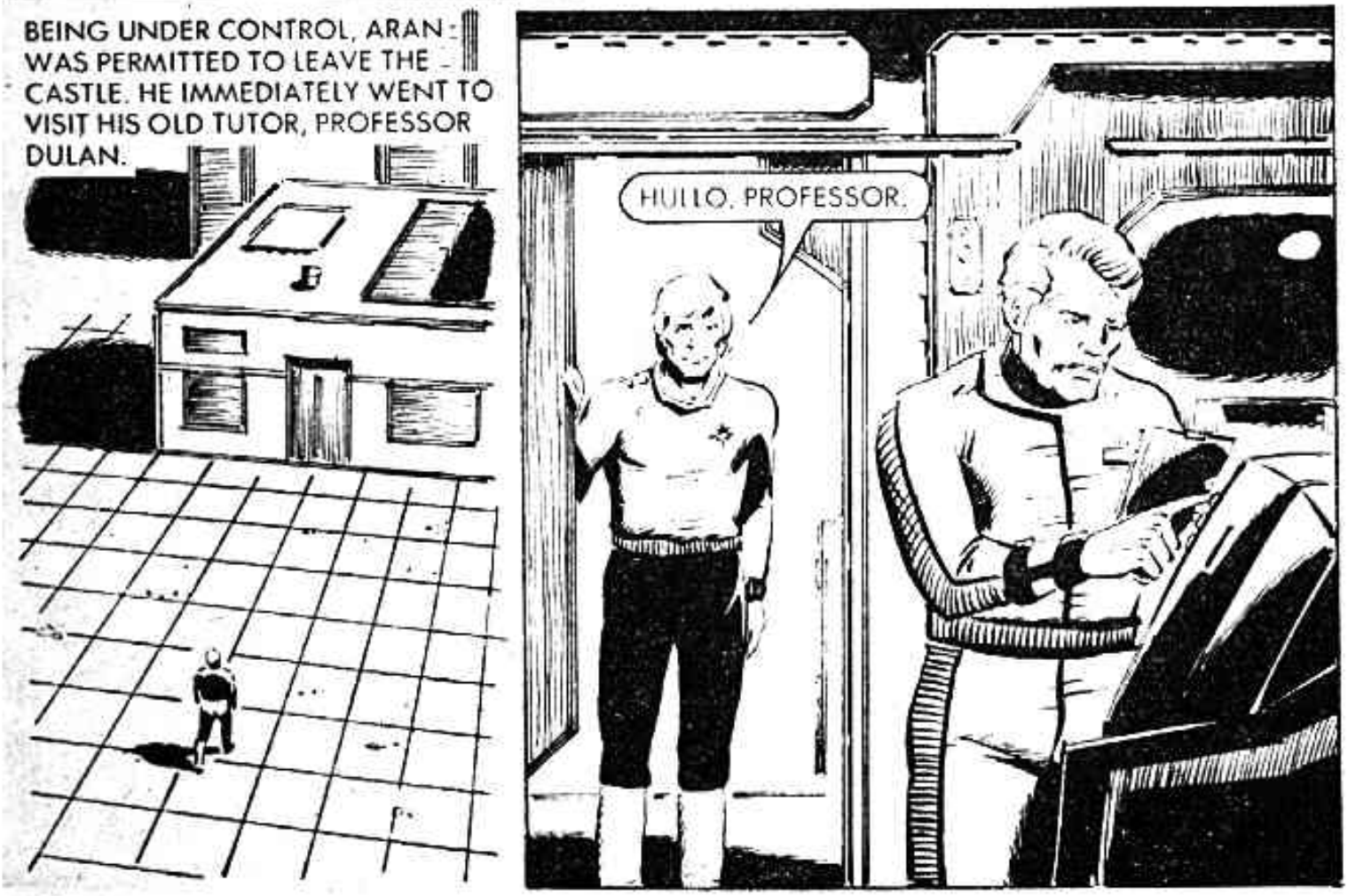

TAKE HIM TO HIS CHAMBERS. HE IS A WEAKLING . . . JUST LIKE HIS SPINELESS FATHER WAS.

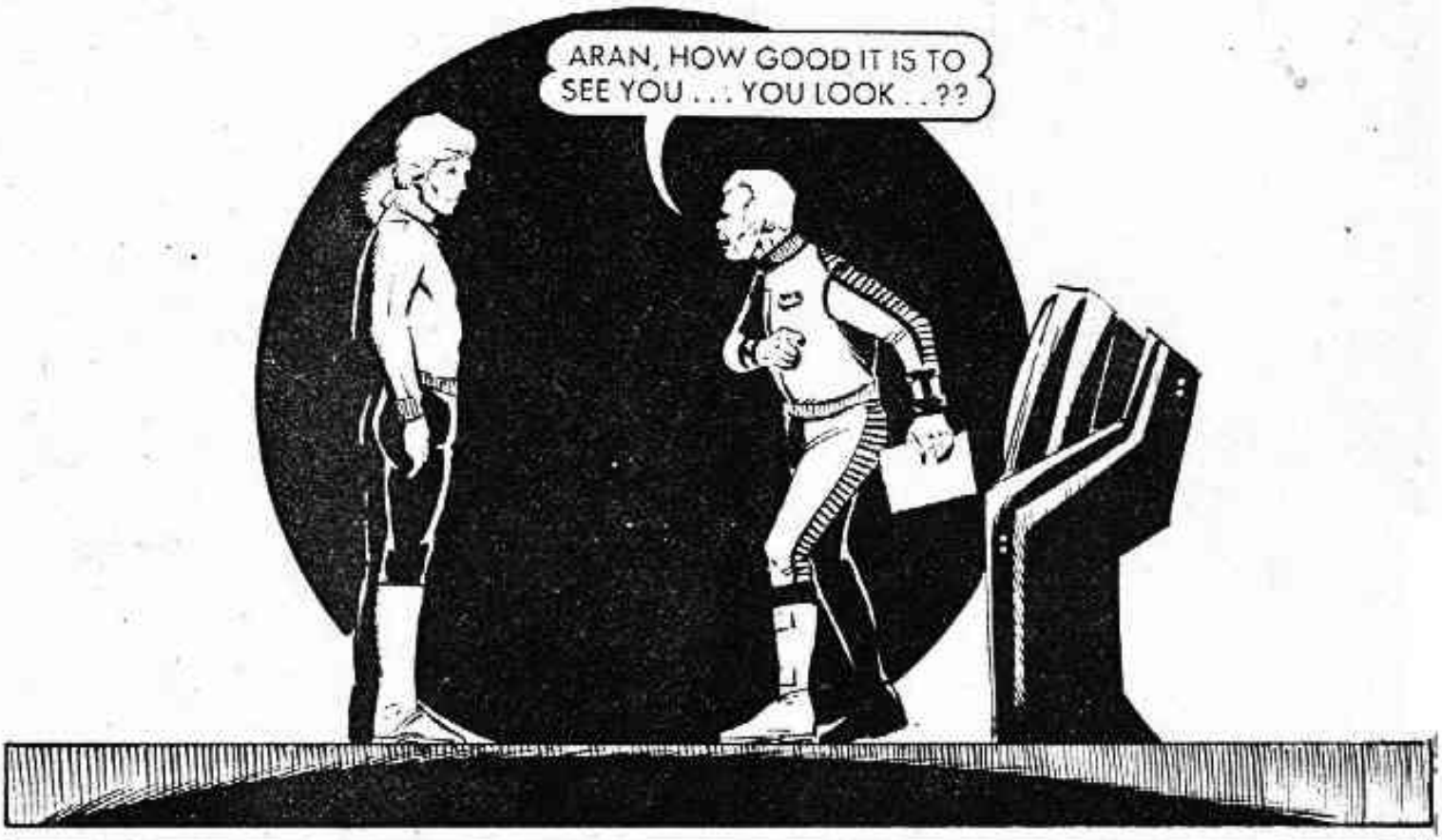
PRINCE ARAN CAME ROUND MANY UNITS LATER —
YOUR MEAL, SIR.

PARDON ME FOR AWAKENING YOU, SIR.
NOTHING TO EAT, THANKS.


ARAN ROSE TO EXAMINE HIS SURROUNDINGS —


A GIANT FACTORY PRODUCING ARMAMENTS.


BEING UNDER CONTROL, ARAN WAS PERMITTED TO LEAVE THE CASTLE. HE IMMEDIATELY WENT TO VISIT HIS OLD TUTOR, PROFESSOR DULAN.
HULLO, PROFESSOR.


ARAN, HOW GOOD IT IS TO SEE YOU . . . YOU LOOK . . ??

THE PROFESSOR IMMEDIATELY REALISED THE PROBLEM AND SET ABOUT DECONTROLLING ARAN.
THAT'S IT! NOW LISTEN, ARAN . . .

IT BEGAN WITH A METEOR STORM A YEAR AGO. AFTER SIX MONTHS THE STARSTONE, AS THE METEORITE CAME TO BE KNOWN, IMPACTED AND GAVE OUT A SHOCK WAVE OF UNIMAGINABLE ENERGY. A CITY WAS DESTROYED, BUT THE STARSTONE ITSELF WAS UNDAMAGED.

I DEVISED A SCEPTRE, WHICH IN FACT IS A LASER TRACK, THROUGH WHICH THE ENERGY COULD BE DIRECTED. IF ONLY I KNEW THEN WHAT I KNOW NOW!

INSIDE THE KING'S PALACE —
ALERT, SIRE! REBEL SHIPS IN CLOSE FORMATION HEADING THIS WAY. I AM ABOUT TO MOBILISE OUR DEFENCE SQUADRONS.
KHAN NEVER INTENDED TO USE THE STARSTONE TO BENEFIT HIS PEOPLE . . . ONLY TO FULFIL HIS OWN MAD DREAMS FOR POWER! HE MURDERED YOUR FATHER AND TURNED OVER ALL PRODUCTION TO ARMAMENTS. LOYAL MEN, LIKE CHARNE, FLED TO THE ASTEROID BELT.

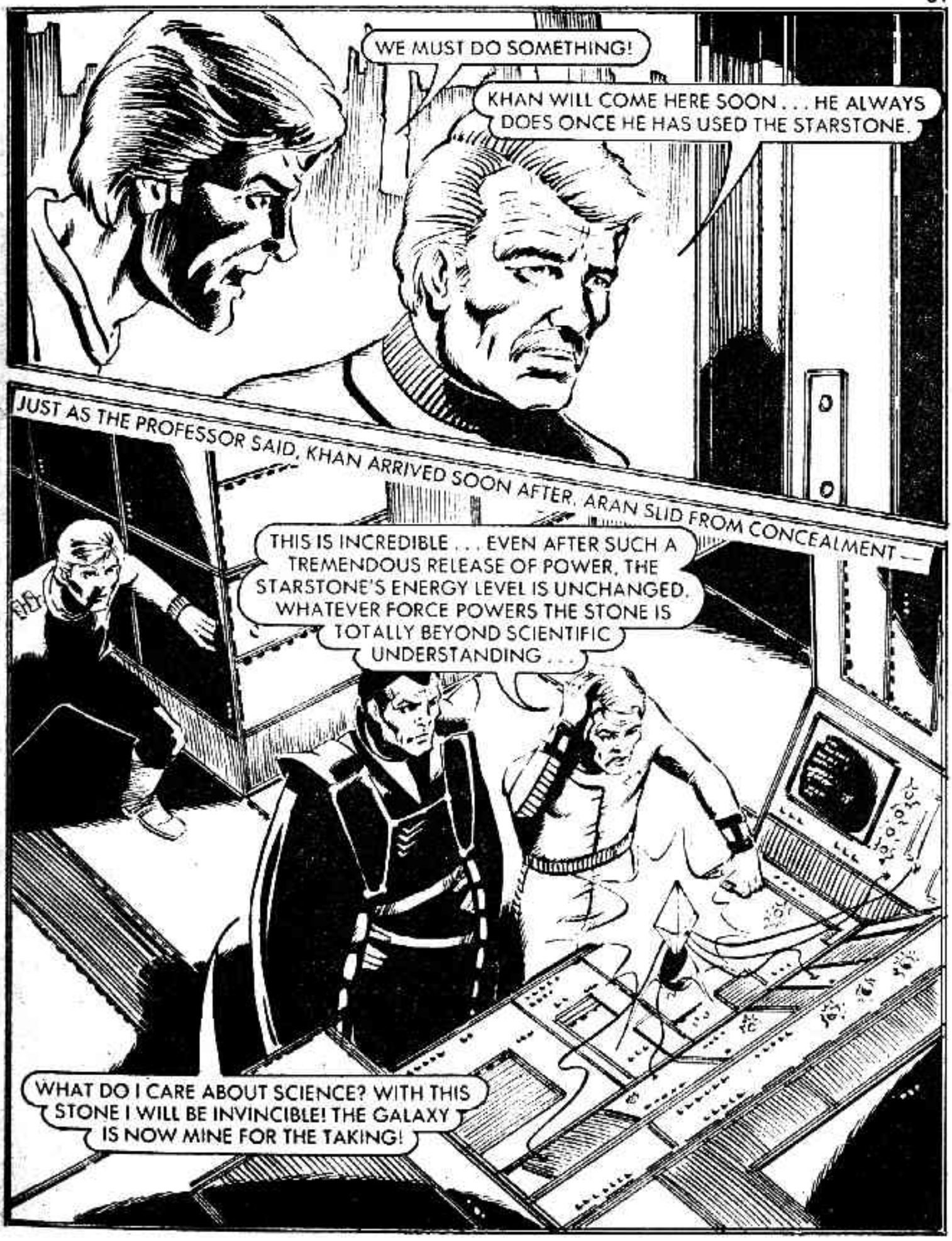
IT'S ABOUT TIME MY SUBJECTS LEARNED THE FULL POWER OF THE STARSTONE . . .

FOR THE NOW HOMELESS OUTLAWS, IT WAS A DESPERATE DO-OR-DIE MISSION TO DESTROY THEIR RUTHLESS MONARCH.
WE'VE NOTHING MORE TO LOSE NOW, MEN. LET'S HIT THEM WITH EVERYTHING WE'VE GOT!

DALTAIRIAN ORBITAL DEFENCES RESPONDED AUTOMATICALLY.
RANDOM EVASION.
WE'RE THROUGH THE OUTER DEFENCES. BUT I DON'T LIKE IT . . . WHY HAVEN'T THE AIR-STRIKE SQUADRONS BEEN MOBILISED?
THERE'S NOTHING BETWEEN US AND THE KING'S PALACE. WE WILL NOT BE STOPPED.

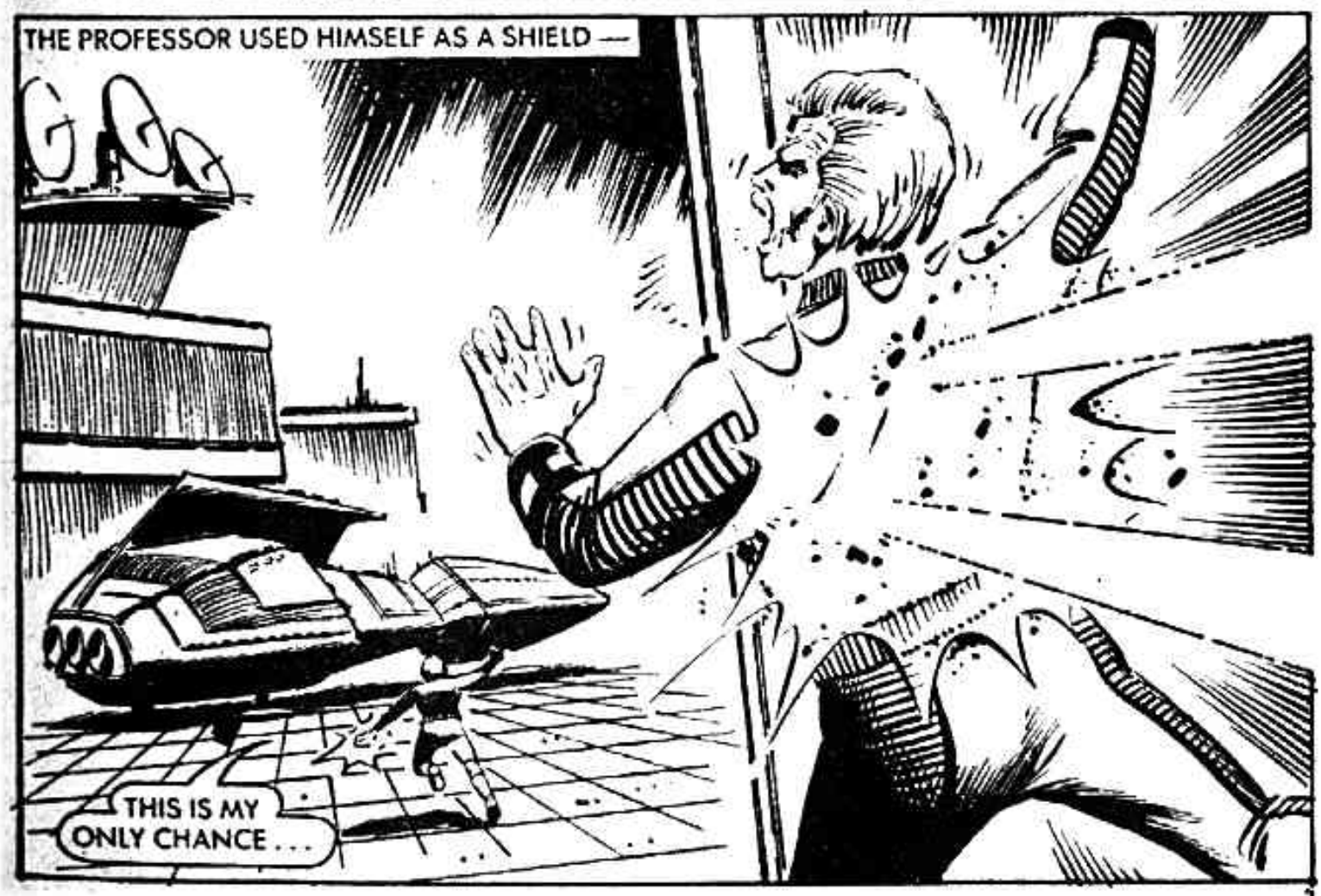
BUT —
FEEL THE POWER OF THE STARSTONE!

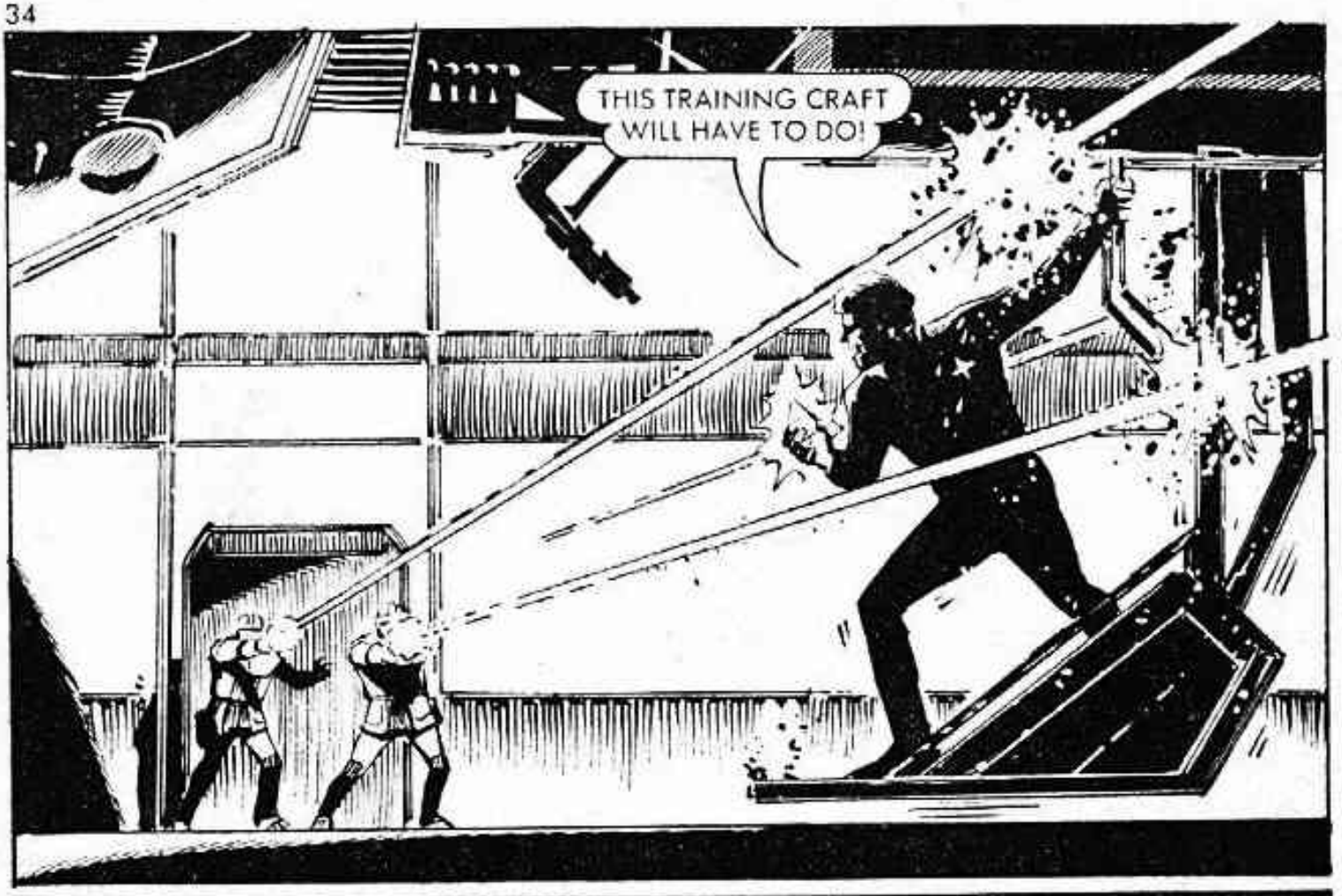
WITHIN SECONDS THE BATTLE WAS OVER —
SO SHALL PERISH ALL THOSE WHO DEFY ME!
SOME DISTANCE AWAY —
HE'S WIPED OUT THE WHOLE REBEL FORCE — ALL BY HIMSELF!
WITH POWER LIKE THAT AT HIS DISPOSAL, KHAN'S DREAM OF GALACTIC CONQUEST COULD SOON BECOME REALITY!

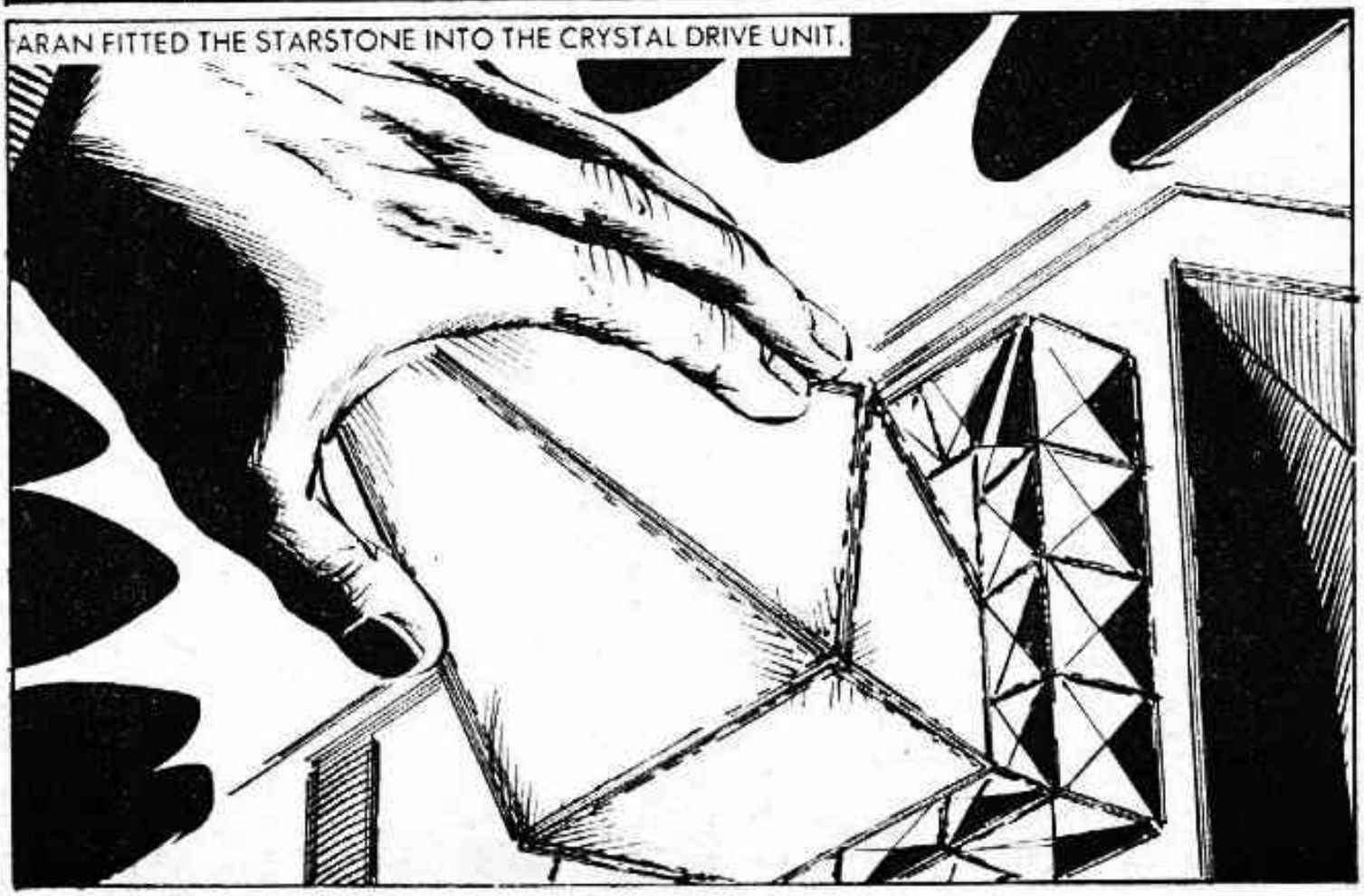

WE MUST DO SOMETHING!
KHAN WILL COME HERE SOON . . . HE ALWAYS DOES ONCE HE HAS USED THE STARSTONE.
JUST AS THE PROFESSOR SAID, KHAN ARRIVED SOON AFTER. ARAN SLID FROM CONCEALMENT —
THIS IS INCREDIBLE . . . EVEN AFTER SUCH A TREMENDOUS RELEASE OF POWER, THE STARSTONE'S ENERGY LEVEL IS UNCHANGED. WHATEVER FORCE POWERS THE STONE IS TOTALLY BEYOND SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING . . .
WHAT DO I CARE ABOUT SCIENCE? WITH THIS STONE I WILL BE INVINCIBLE! THE GALAXY IS NOW MINE FOR THE TAKING!

ARAN WATCHED AS KHAN STRUCK THE PROFESSOR.
YOU ARE MAD, KHAN . . . I SHALL END YOUR EVIL.
KILL HIM . . . GET THE STARSTONE BACK!

FLEE, MY PRINCE, FLEE!
KILL HIM!


THE PROFESSOR USED HIMSELF AS A SHIELD —
THIS IS MY ONLY CHANCE . . .

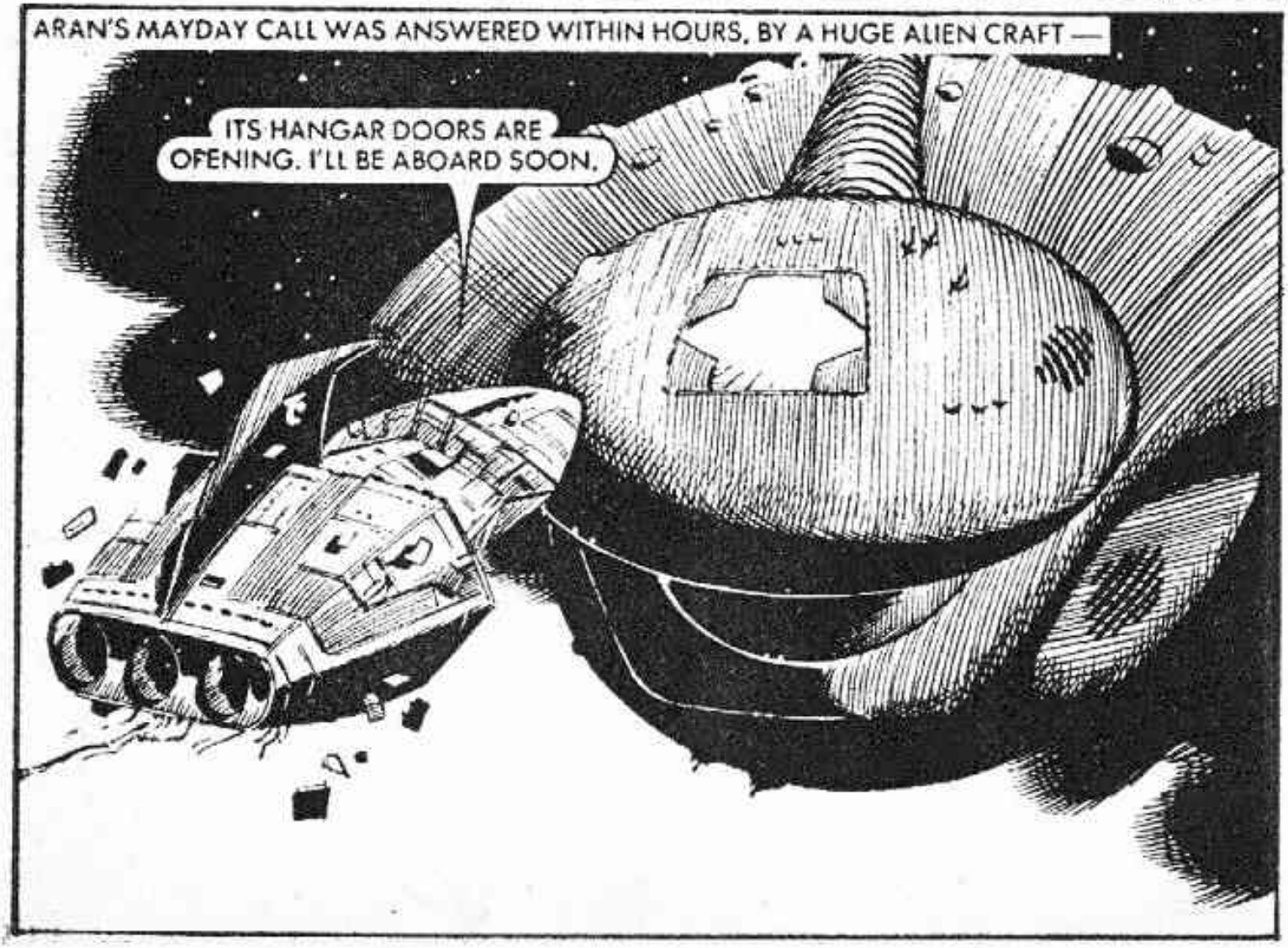

THIS TRAINING CRAFT WILL HAVE TO DO!


ARAN FITTED THE STARSTONE INTO THE CRYSTAL DRIVE UNIT.

AND MOMENTS LATER THE AWESOME POWER OF THE STARSTONE PROJECTED THE SMALL CRAFT INTO THE DALTAIRIAN SKY.
INSIDE THE CRAMPED CONFINES OF THE CRAFT . . .
THIS VELOCITY IS UNBELIEVABLE . . . I'VE ALREADY LEFT THE DALTAIRIAN SYSTEM WAY BEHIND, BUT THE SHIP IS SHAKING ITSELF APART UNDER THE STRAIN. I'M GOING TO HAVE TO CUT POWER.

ARAN APPLIED THE RETROS BEFORE REMOVING THE STARSTONE.

ALL I CAN DO NOW IS PUT OUT A MAYDAY AND HOPE THERE IS SOMEONE IN THE VICINITY TO RECEIVE IT.


ARAN'S MAYDAY CALL WAS ANSWERED WITHIN HOURS, BY A HUGE ALIEN CRAFT —
ITS HANGAR DOORS ARE OPENING. I'LL BE ABOARD SOON.

BUT AS ARAN LEFT HIS SHIP . . .
YOUR MAYDAY TOOK ME PARSECS OFF ROUTE . . . IF I MISS MY DEADLINE, YOU'LL PAY!

I WAS MAKING GOOD TIME, ON A BONUS FOR BEING EARLY, THEN YOUR MAYDAY SOUNDED. IF THIS VESSEL WASN'T FULLY AUTOMATED, I WOULD HAVE OVER-RIDDEN THE MAYDAY RESPONSE . . .

AS ARAN STRUGGLED TO FREE HIMSELF FROM THE GUARDS —
WHAT HAVE WE HERE?

KEP YOUR HANDS OFF THAT STONE!

THAT'S SOME POWER CRYSTAL, BOY . . .

YOU'RE NOT GETTING IT.
AARGH . . . LET GO . . . I SURRENDER. I-I DON'T KNOW WHAT CAME OVER ME. IF MY EMPLOYERS EVER GOT TO HEAR OF THIS I WOULD LOSE MY JOB.
CONSIDER THE MATTER FORGOTTEN. JUST LET ME OFF AT YOUR NEXT PORT OF CALL.
THAT WILL BE MARKHETT. WE SHOULD BE THERE IN LESS THAN ONE STANDARD DAY.

MARKHETT WAS AN ARTIFICIAL WORLD IN THE HEART OF THE GALAXY'S DENSELY POPULATED CENTRAL REGION. IT WAS A PLACE OF TRADE AND COMMERCE FOR THE MANY VARIED RACES THAT LIVED THERE.

PRINCE ARAN LEFT THE SHIP AS SOON AS IT TOUCHED DOWN.
THIS ROBOT I REPAIRED WILL KEEP HIM UNDER OBSERVATION WHILE I GO AND LOOK UP SOME OLD FRIENDS. I'M NOT LETTING HIM WALK AWAY JUST LIKE THAT!

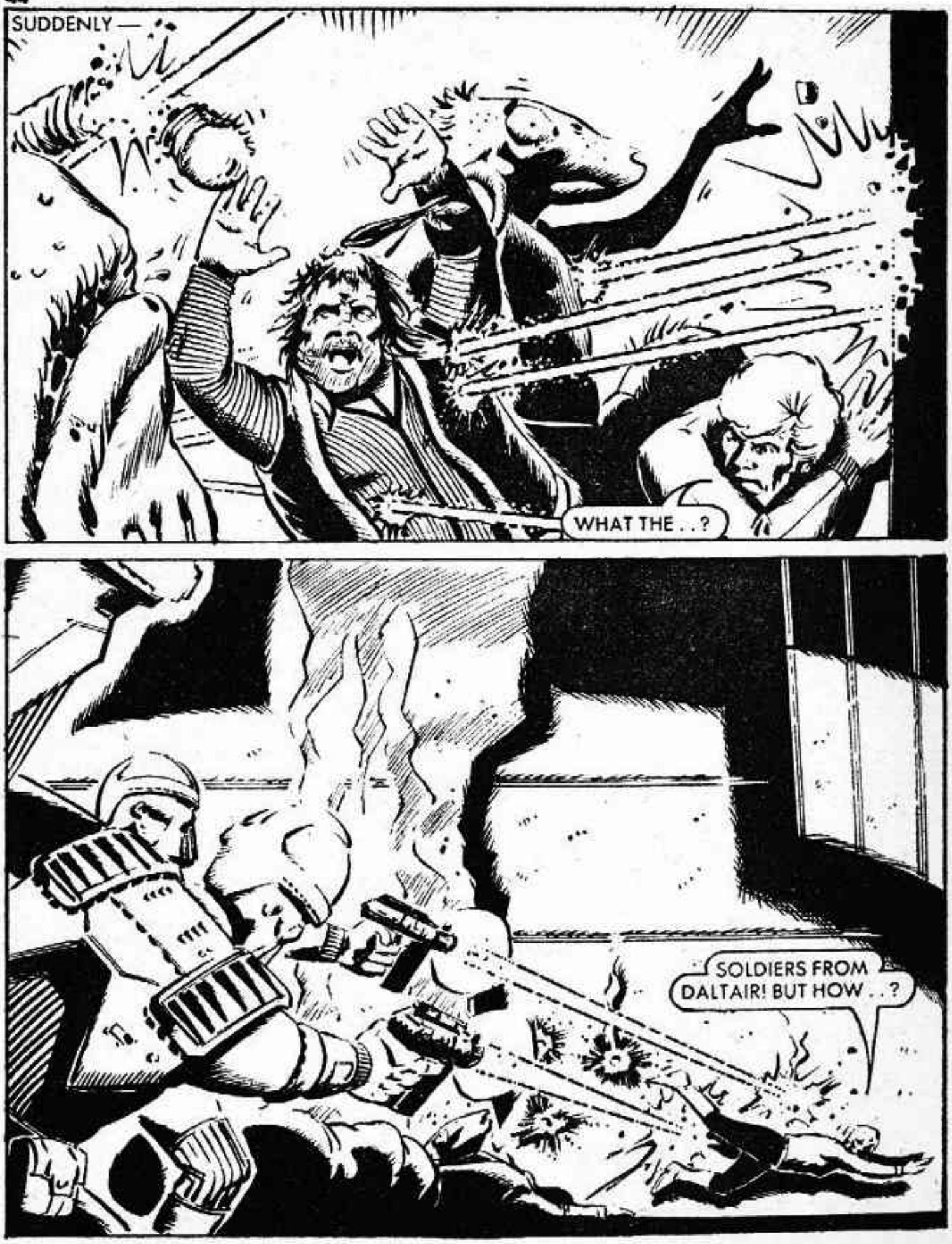
ARAN SEARCHED FOR A PILOT WILLING TO TAKE HIM OFFWORLD . . .
YOU'VE NO CREDITS, NOTHING TO TRADE EITHER . . . WHAT DO YOU THINK I'M RUNNING HERE — A CHARITY SERVICE?
BUT IT'S VITAL THAT I GET AWAY FROM HERE. YOU'VE GOT TO TRUST ME . . .

I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY FROM HERE AND TAKE THE STARSTONE SOMEPLACE WHERE KHAN WILL NEVER FIND IT . . .

BUT —

YOUR SKILL AT UNARMED COMBAT WON'T HELP YOU THIS TIME, BOY. WE WANT THAT CRYSTAL OF YOURS . . . AND WE MEAN TO GET IT!

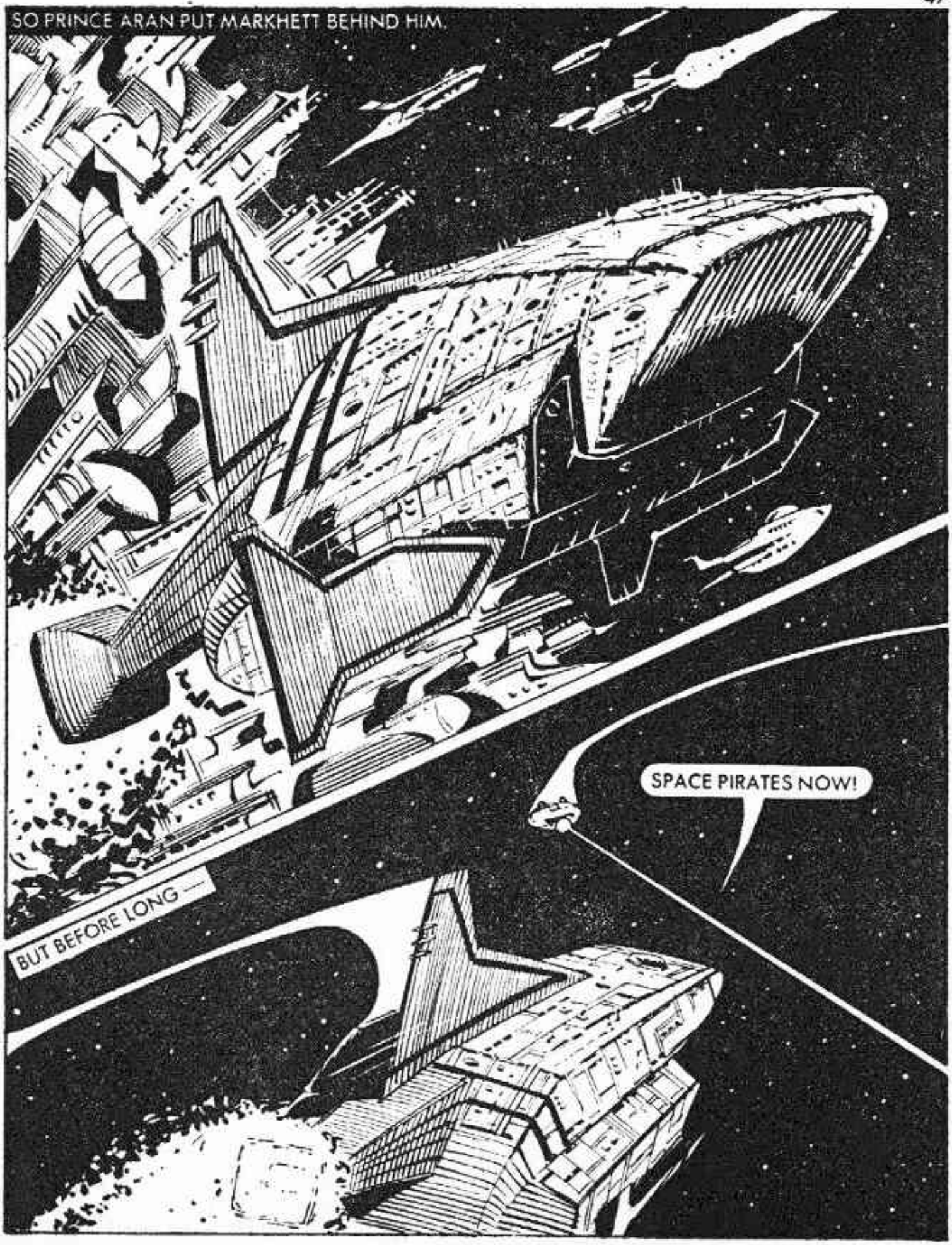
DON'T EXPECT ANY LAST-MINUTE RESCUES, EITHER. ON MARKHETT EVERYONE IS TOO BUSY GOING ABOUT THEIR OWN BUSINESS TO BOTHER MUCH ABOUT BACK-STREET TRANSACTIONS LIKE THIS.


SUDDENLY —
WHAT THE . . ?
SOLDIERS FROM DALTAIR! BUT HOW . . ?

I FORGOT ABOUT THIS . . .
ARAN THREW THE MEDALLION INTO A PASSING HOVERTRANSPORT —
THAT OUGHT TO PUT THEM OFF MY TRAIL FOR A WHILE.
NO SOONER HAD PRINCE ARAN CONCEALED HIMSELF THAN . . .
THIS WAY, MEN. HIS TRACER SIGNAL IS STILL GOOD AND STRONG.

ARAN WAITED A LONG TIME BEFORE RETURNING TO THE SCENE OF THE ATTACK —
I DON'T WANT TO DO THIS, BUT I HAVEN'T ANY CHOICE. THOSE SOLDIERS WON'T STAY FOOLED FOR LONG.

HE QUICKLY RETURNED TO THE LAUNCHWAYS —
NOW THAT MY ARGUMENT IS MORE PERSUASIVE . . . GET ME OFFWORLD.
OKAY, OKAY. JUST TAKE IT EASY WITH THAT PISTOL, WILL YOU?


SO PRINCE ARAN PUT MARKHETT BEHIND HIM.
SPACE PIRATES NOW!
BUT BEFORE LONG —

WHAT DO WE DO NOW?
THE BEST THING TO DO WOULD BE TO OFFER NO RESISTANCE. ONCE THEY SEE WE HAVE NOTHING TO OFFER THEM THEY WILL LEAVE US IN PEACE.

THE PIRATES' BOARDING TUBE ADHERED TO THE OUTER AIRLOCK. THEN —
CHARNE!
PRINCE ARAN! WHAT IN SPACE ARE YOU DOING HERE?

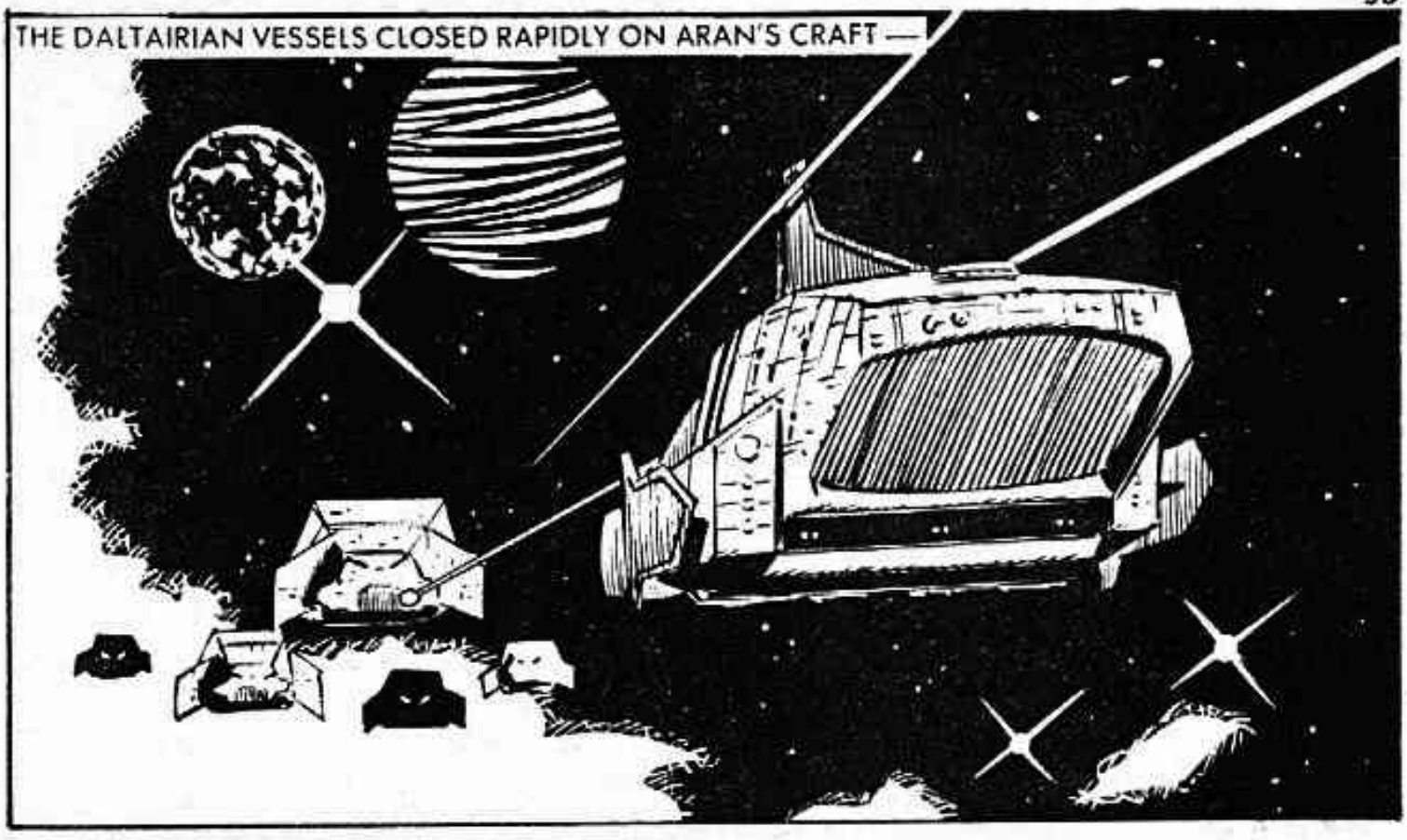
QUICKLY, THEY EXCHANGED STORIES.

FOR MANY PARSECS THE CRAFT TRAVELLED THE SPACEWAYS UNTIL —
WE'RE SLOWING DOWN.
THE MAIN WARP DRIVE HAS GIVEN UP ON US. SHIPS LIKE THIS WERE NOT BUILT FOR SUCH LONG JOURNEYS.
SCAN FOR SOMEWHERE TO LAND.
I'LL GET THE SPACER AND SEE IF ANYTHING CAN BE DONE IN THE ENGINE ROOM.
MOMENTS LATER —
STRANGE . . . THERE'S A VOICE COMING FROM INSIDE THIS CABIN.
. . . FAULT IN THE WARP DRIVE. IF YOU LOCK ONTO MY SIGNAL . . .

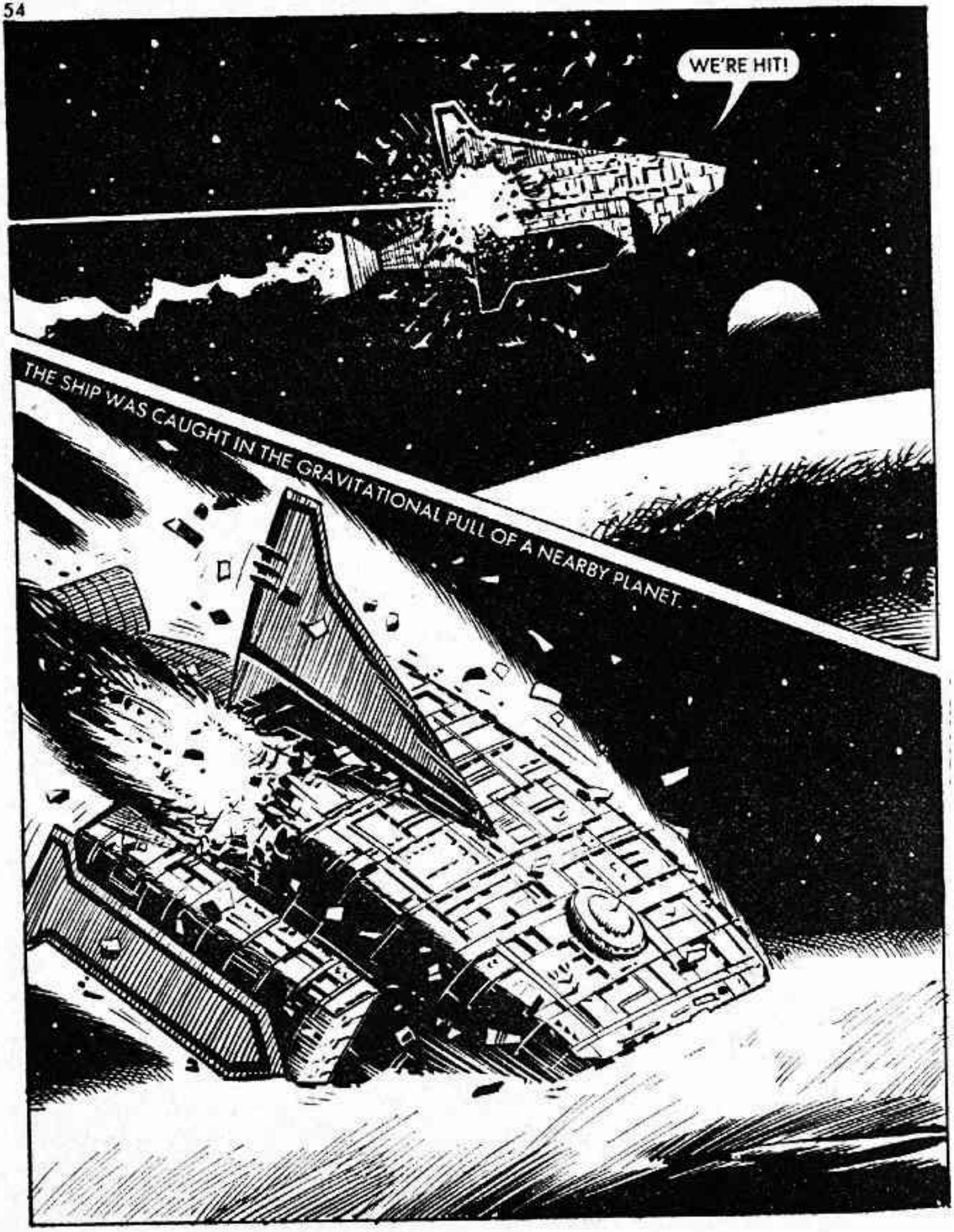
. . . YOU WILL BE ABLE TO OVERHAUL US IN A MATTER OF — WHA . . ?

JUPE — YOU'RE CONTACTING DALTAIR.
IT DOESN'T MATTER NOW — THEY'VE LOCKED ON TO THE TRANSMISSION. THEY'LL BE HERE SOON.

TOO LATE!
EVEN AS THEY STOOD IN THE CABIN —
ATTENTION. THIS IS CHARNE . . . ALL HANDS TO BATTLE STATIONS. FIVE DALTAIRIAN SHIPS ON OUR TAIL AND CLOSING FAST!
INSIDE ONE OF THE PURSUING SHIPS —
WE HAVE CAUGHT UP WITH THEM, SIRE.
ATTACK! ARAN WILL DIE AND I SHALL RECLAIM MY STARSTONE.


THE DALTAIRIAN VESSELS CLOSED RAPIDLY ON ARAN'S CRAFT —

THEY — THEY'RE SHOOTING AT US!
WHAT DID YOU EXPECT FROM KHAN AND HIS MURDERING COHORTS?


WE'RE HIT!
THE SHIP WAS CAUGHT IN THE GRAVITATIONAL PULL OF A NEARBY PLANET.

IT WAS A COMBINATION OF LUCK AND EXPERT PILOTING THAT BROUGHT THE SHIP DOWN IN ONE PIECE.
END OF THE LINE. MEN! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE WHILE WE STILL CAN!

MOMENTS LATER —

THE OTHER SHIPS WILL BE LANDING SOON. WE'LL HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF DEFENDING OURSELVES FROM THOSE RUINS OVER THERE.

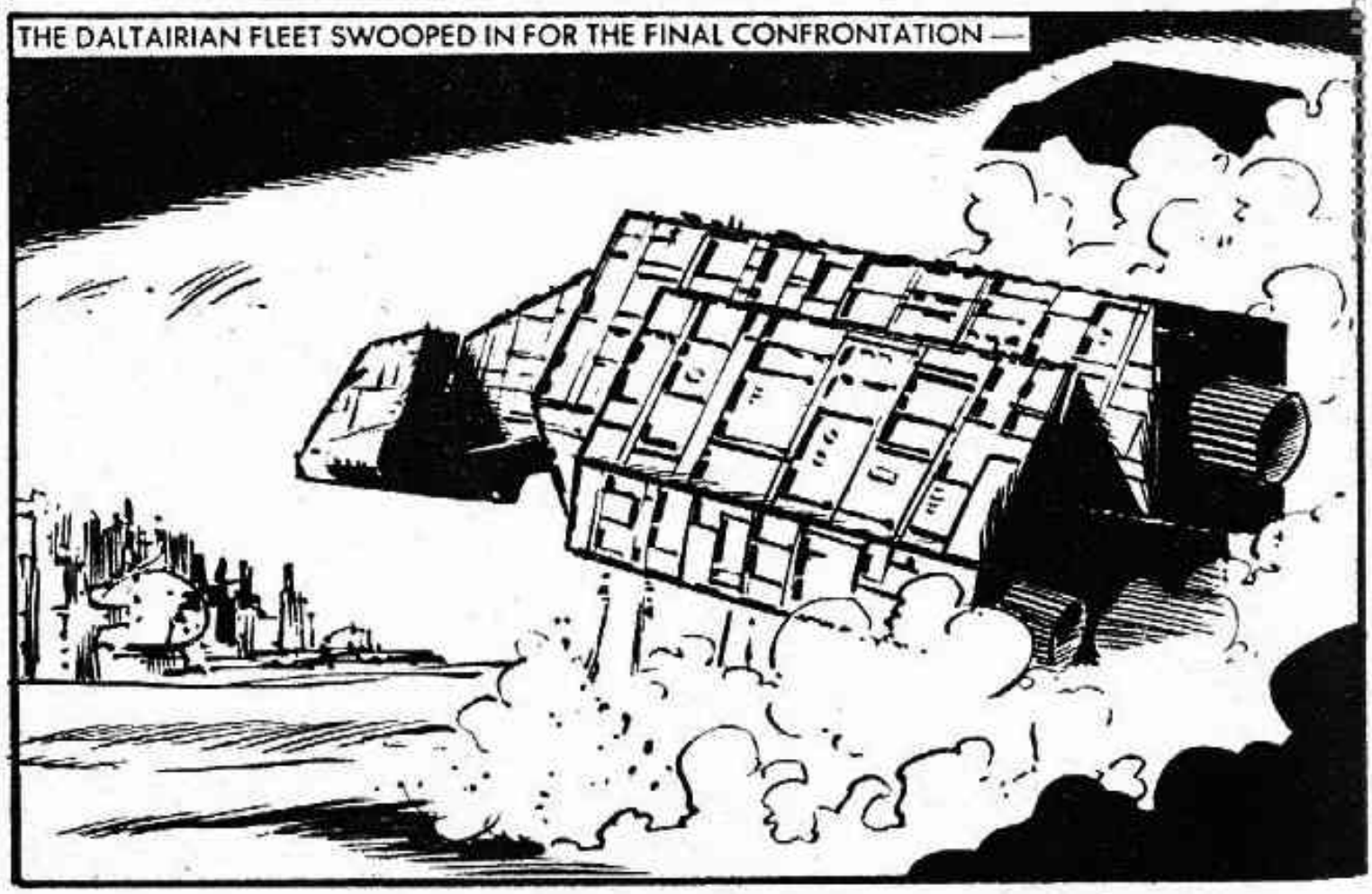
THESE RUINS MUST BE THOUSANDS OF YEARS OLD.
I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED TO THE INHABITANTS?

INCREDIBLE . . . IT LOOKS AS IF THE WHOLE POPULATION HAS BEEN PUT INTO SUSPENDED ANIMATION.
BUT WHAT COULD THEY BE WAITING FOR? THERE CAN BE NO HOPE FOR REVIVAL ON A WORLD AS DEAD AS THIS . . .
WHAT THE . . ?
A CRYO-UNIT OPENED. THE HANDGUN'S POWER CELLS WERE DRAINED, AND CIRCUITS LONG-UNUSED BEGAN TO HUM WITH LIFE. THEN HESITANTLY THE INHABITANT BEGAN TO SPEAK —
GREETINGS, OFF WORLDERS . . . IT IS MY DUTY TO WELCOME YOU HERE . . . FOR UNTOLD CENTURIES WE HAVE BEEN AWAITING YOUR COMING . . .

THIS WAS ONCE A BEAUTIFUL THRIVING WORLD, BUT WHEN OUR SUN BEGAN TO COOL, MOST OF THE POPULATION LEFT TO SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE GALAXY. THE ONLY SOURCE OF POWER DISAPPEARED SLOWLY . . .
THOSE OF US WHO DECIDED TO STAY ON OUR WORLD WERE EVENTUALLY FORCED INTO THESE CRYOGENIC UNITS WHEN THE LAST OF OUR POWER RESERVES WERE EXHAUSTED. WE HOPED THAT IN THE CENTURIES TO COME A WAY WOULD BE FOUND TO REVITALISE OUR HOMEWORLD. NOW THAT DAY IS UPON US. YOU HAVE BROUGHT WITH YOU THE MEANS TO END OUR LONG SLEEP.

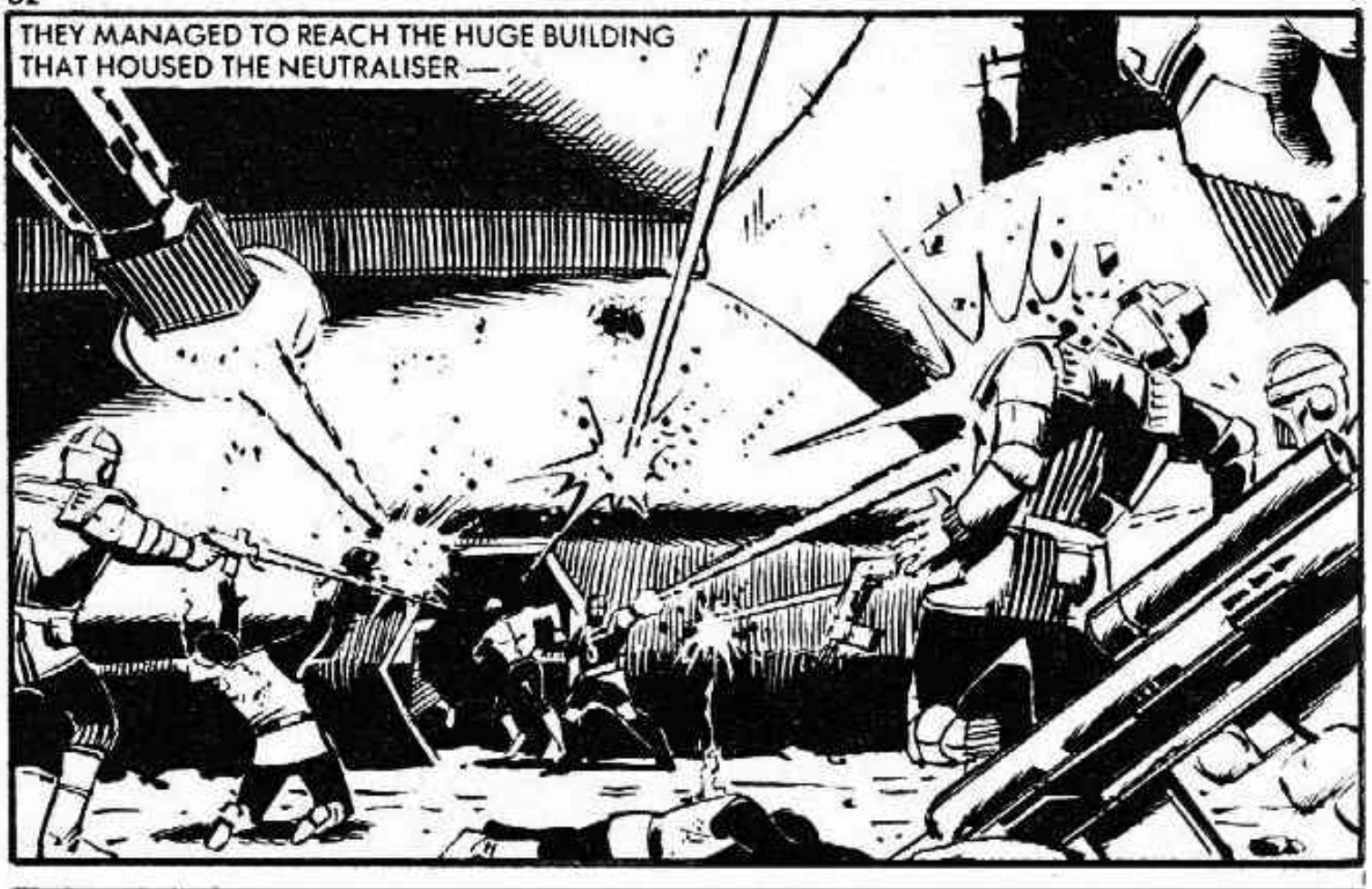
I'M SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU, FRIEND. BUT OUR ARRIVAL ON THIS PLANET WAS AN ACCIDENT . . . AND OUR CHANCES OF HELPING YOU LOOK VERY SLIM INDEED.
PERHAPS A NECTRON BEAMER, OR A CRYSTAL . . .

YOU MEAN, THIS?

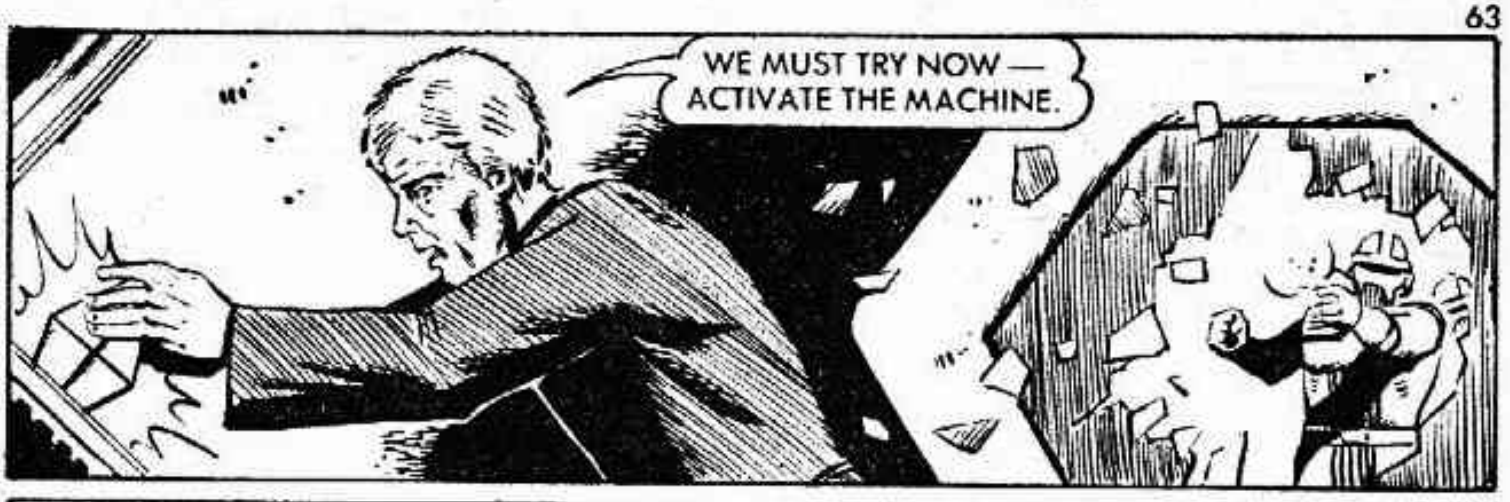

THE DALTAIRIAN FLEET SWOOPED IN FOR THE FINAL CONFRONTATION —

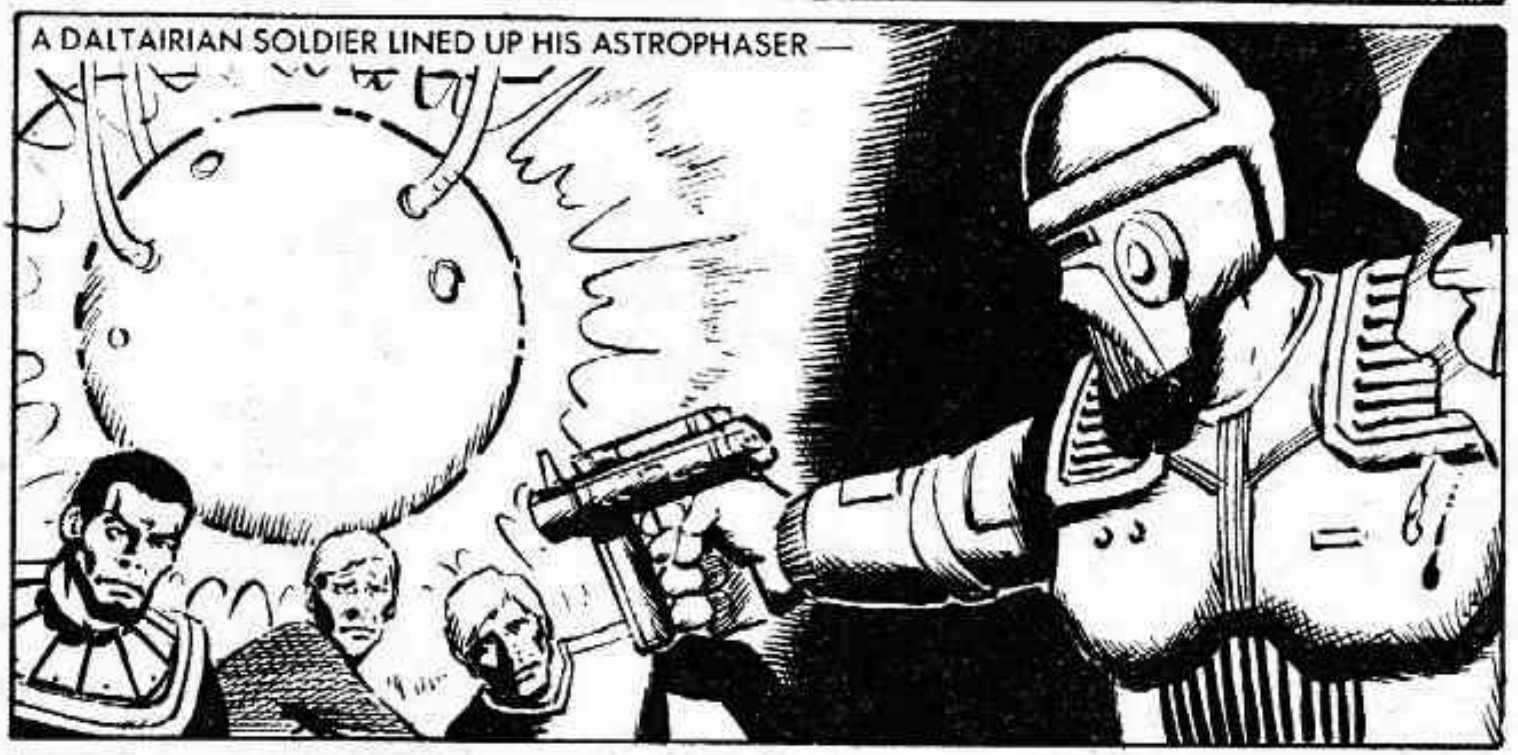
GROUND TROOPS WERE DEPLOYED —
TEAR THOSE RUINS APART— I WANT THOSE REBELS FOUND!

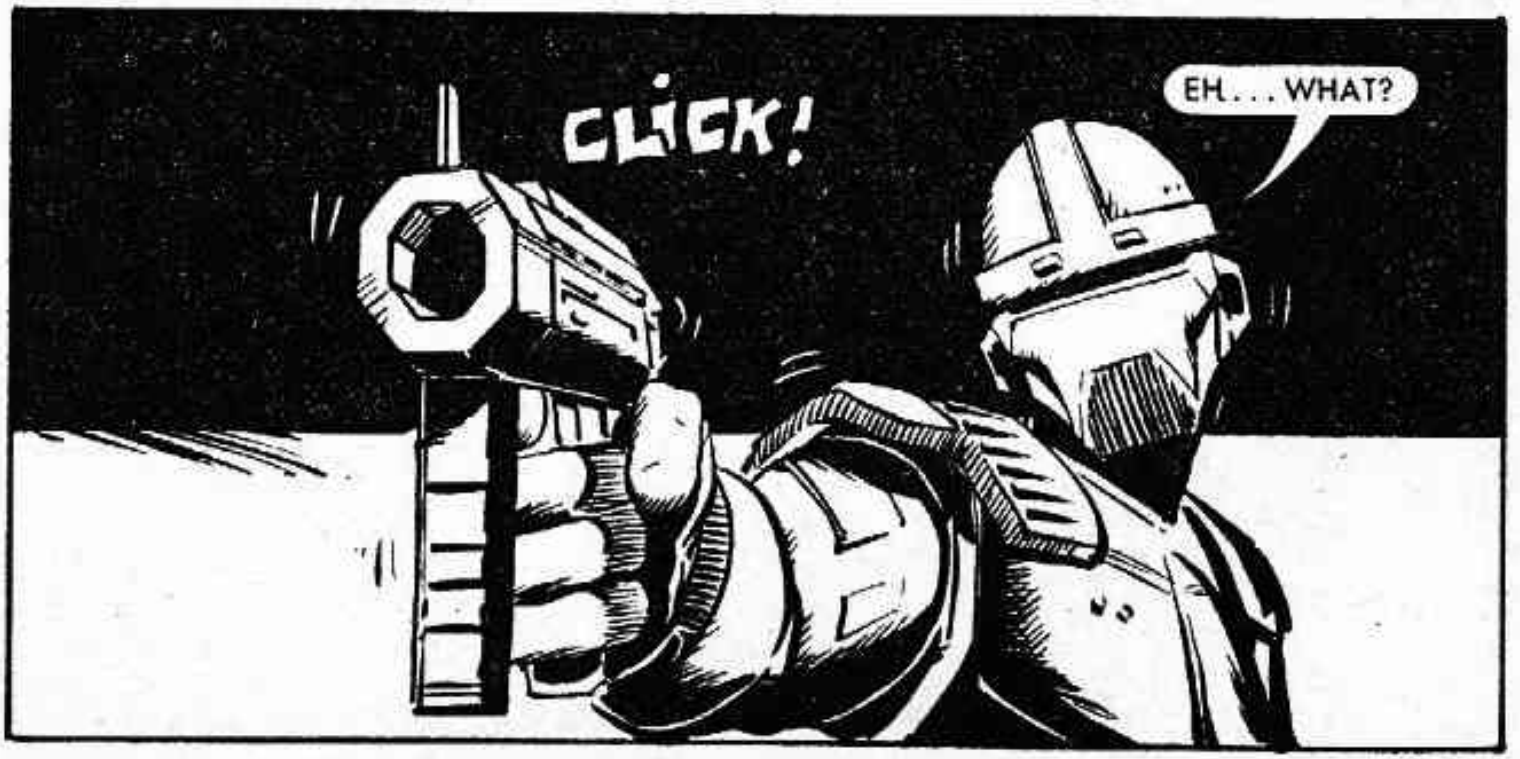
WE HAVE BUT ONE CHANCE . . . THE CRYSTAL MAY BE ABLE TO POWER OUR NEUTRALISER.


THEY MANAGED TO REACH THE HUGE BUILDING THAT HOUSED THE NEUTRALISER —

YOU MUST HURRY — KHAN HAS ALMOST BROKEN THROUGH.

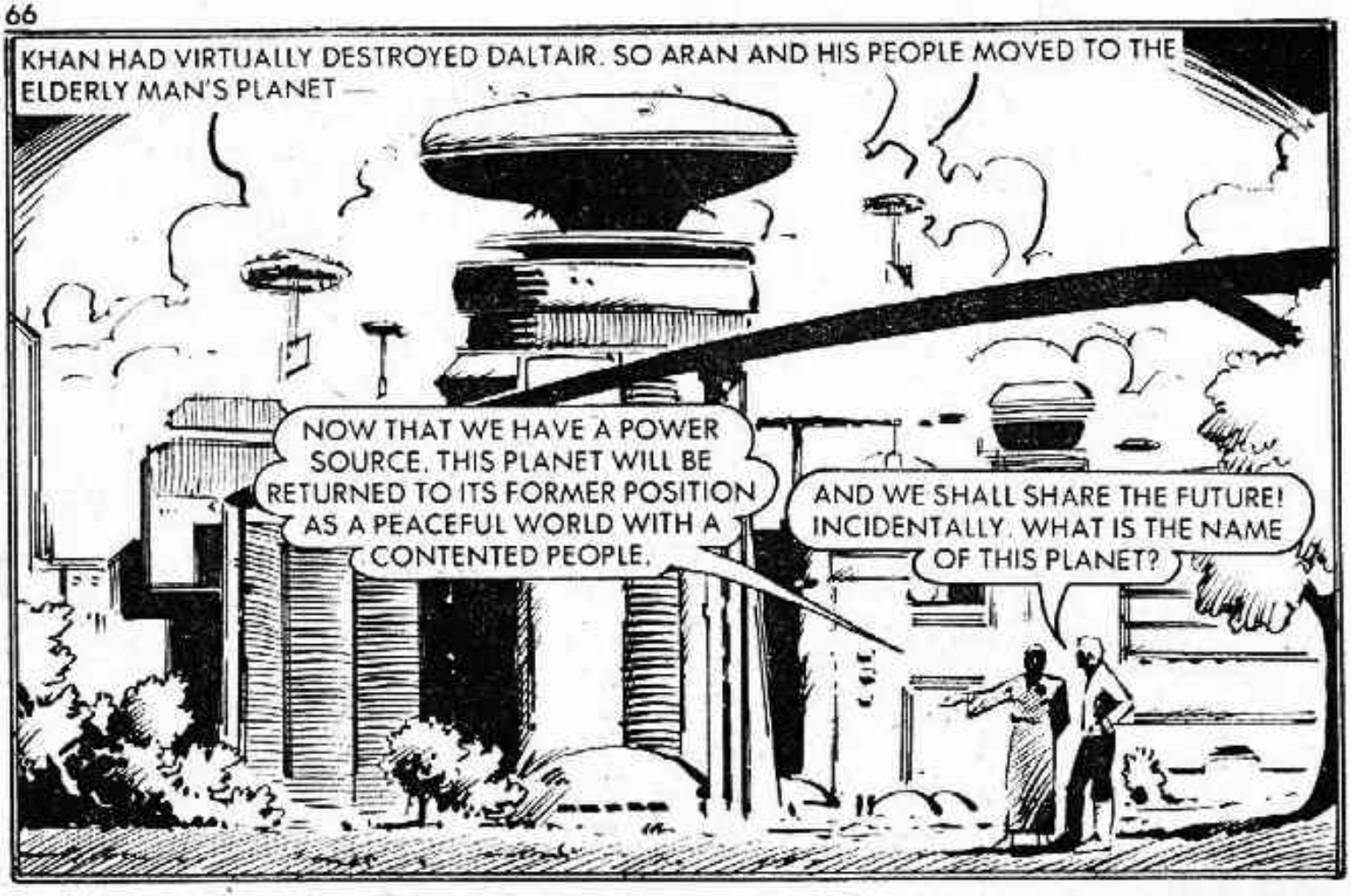

WE MUST TRY NOW — ACTIVATE THE MACHINE.


A DALTAIRIAN SOLDIER LINED UP HIS ASTROPHASER —


CLICK!
EH... WHAT?

I HAVE YOU AT MY MERCY — GUARDS. KILL THEM.
BUT OUR WEAPONS DO NOT WORK.
YOU HAVE USED THE STARSTONE AGAINST ME! FOOLS — MY SCEPTRE WORKS ANYWHERE IN THE VICINITY OF THE STARSTONE.

THE VAST POWER LEAPT THE GAP BETWEEN MACHINE AND SCEPTRE. THE ENERGY SURGE WAS TOO MUCH FOR KHAN.
TIS OVER! THE EVIL ONE IS DEAD. WE CAN BREATH FREELY AGAIN.



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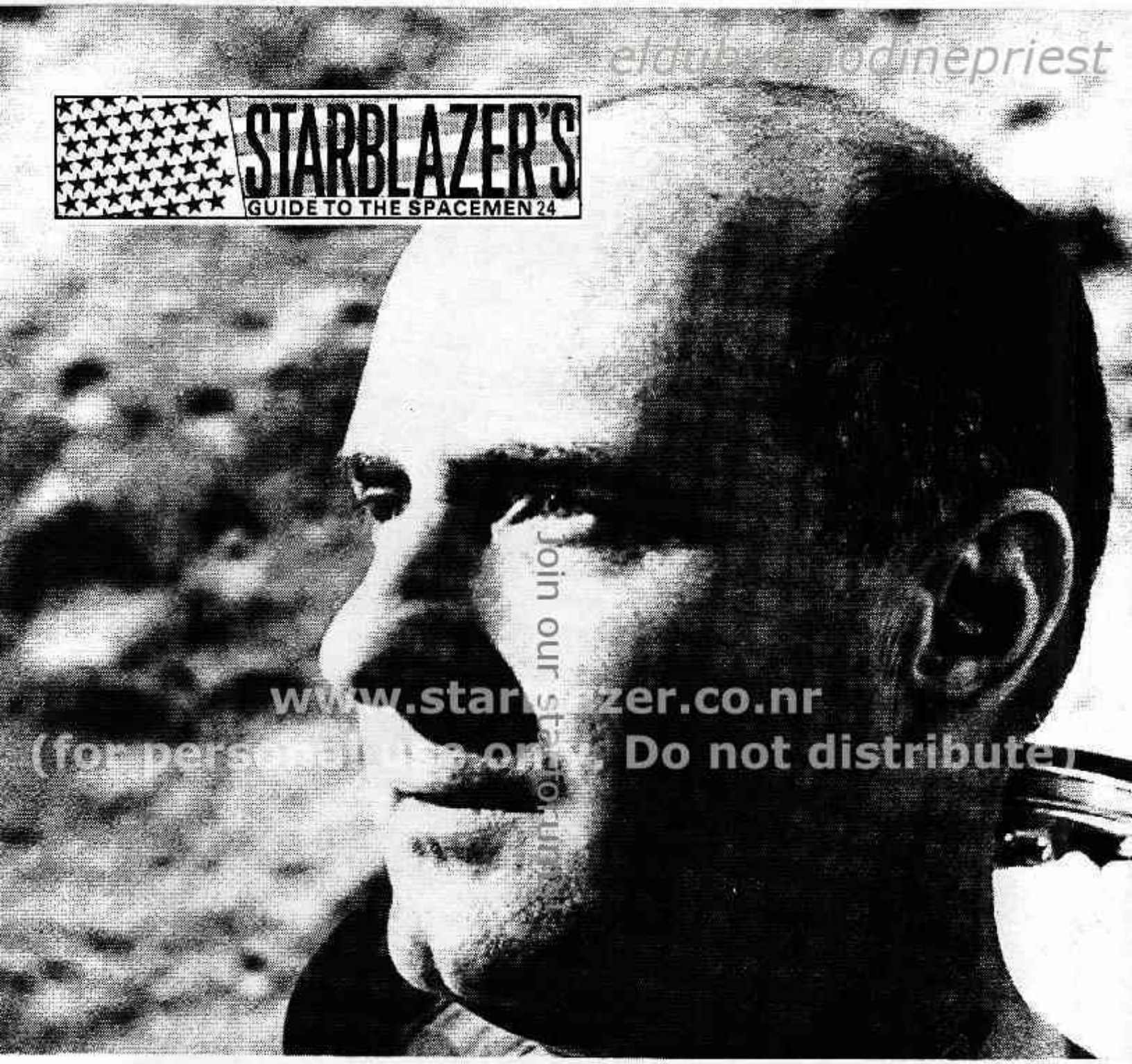
DON'T MISS

THIS MONTH'S OTHER ACTION-PACKED ADVENTURE

NOW ON SALE



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Major Thomas Patten Stafford, Jr., 35, U.S.A.F., flew Gemini 6 on December 15, 1965. This flight was postponed from October. The flight lasted 1 day 1 hour 51 minutes 43 seconds. Stafford also commanded Gemini 9, launched June 3, 1966 and Apollo 10 around the Moon on a mission which lasted 8 days 0 hour 3 minutes 23 seconds beginning on May 18, 1969. He also led the US-USSR joint mission on July 15, 1975.

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